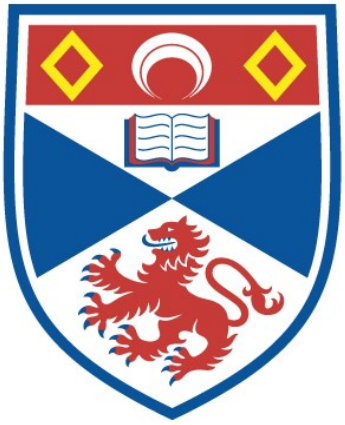
THE FOREIGN POLICY OF EGYPT UNDER MUBARAK: THE PRIMACY OF REGIME SECURITY

Nael M. Shama

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
University of St Andrews



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(A Thesis Submitted for the Award of the Degree of Doctorate of Philosophy)

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Abstract:

The study explores Egypt’s foreign policy under President Hosni Mubarak. It focuses on the way Mubarak's regime dealt with internal and external threats to maintain security and bolster his internal hold on power.

Two case studies are chosen to test the hypotheses: Egypt’s reluctance to reestablish diplomatic ties with the Islamic Republic of Iran and Egypt’s response to the Greater Middle East Initiative proposed by the Bush administration and the series of Western efforts aimed at promoting political reform in the Middle East, in particular the measures it took to warm up its relations with Israel, including the signing of the QIZ treaty.

The following arguments are made:

1- Security is central in understanding the behavior of Third World states.
2- The traditional 'balance of power' model should be substituted with the 'balance of threat' theory.
3- Faced with a combination of internal and external threats, Third World states most often tend to 'omnibalance' between both sets.
4- Foreign policy decisions in the Third World are determined by the level of internal and external threats, the availability of regional and international allies and the idiosyncrasies of leaders, their type of legitimacy and the interests of their ruling coalitions.
5- The foreign policies of Third World states, which tend to be lacking in strong institutions, democracy or national consensus and facing threats from within as well as without, are less likely to be shaped by or serve a national interest than a regime interest.

CHAPTER **I**

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction & Research Question:

In analyzing the foreign policies of Third World states, scholars have been primarily concerned with issues like how these states aim to maintain (and enhance) their national security amid an unfavorable regional and international environment (the Cold War or after), their efforts to promote economic development (and the impact this has had on their political independence), how sectarian cleavages affect the conduct of foreign policy in multi-ethnic states, as well as the role of Ideology (Islam or Arab Nationalism) in foreign-policy making.

When it comes to the study of Egyptian foreign policy under its three post-revolution presidents (Nasser, Sadat and Mubarak), scholars have dealt with issues like the pursuit of leadership in the Arab world and the different forms it took across fifty years, the changing impact of economic factors upon the decision-making process, the nature of the relationship with superpowers (i.e. where it lies on the dependence-independence spectrum), decisions of war (1962 in Yemen, 67 and 73 with Israel and 91 against Iraq's Saddam) and peace (77 with the Israeli foe), in addition to the relationship between ideology and foreign policy. In studying these topics, various foreign policy inputs have been investigated: geographic realities, characteristics and size of population, economic and military power, type of political system and the role of different state institutions (the Presidency, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the military establishment) in the decision-making process.

This study is about the way Egypt's foreign policy under President Mubarak was used to bolster his internal hold on power. Therefore, it explores an area rarely touched upon by researchers before, which is the relationship between regime security (and survival in the long-run**)** -as opposed to "national security"- as an objective sought by decision-makers and the conduct of foreign policy in authoritarian Third World states. With a very few exceptions, this question has been overlooked by previous studies of Egypt. Two main reasons explain this. First, the lines between national security and regime security are, generally speaking, blurred and not always easy to distinguish hence hindering the possibility of conducting a sound research. According to Ayoob, it is often "difficult to disentangle issues of state security from those of regime security in the Third World"[1]. Second, the high risk entailed by

Egyptian researchers upon crossing the "red lines" in an authoritarian state inhibited most of them from studying such a sensitive topic.

The general questions here are: How do Third World regimes deal with internal and external threats? What factors affect their type of response to these threats? Do regime security considerations leave their print on the way foreign policy is handled as they obviously do on the way domestic policies are administered? More specifically, could foreign policy be used by elites in the Third World to maximize their chances of political survival? If this is the case, then what are the mechanisms by which this is executed? And why is this mostly common in the Third World? And what conclusions could one drive from the case of Egypt under Mubarak? And what examples could essentially prove this hypothesis?

The findings of this research are useful in providing a better understanding of Middle East politics, the foreign policies of Third World states and the politics of pivotal states. Furthermore, they fill a gap in the existing literature on foreign policy-making in Egypt. Apparently, the available literature on Egypt's foreign policy suffers from two major defects: scarcity and low professional quality.

1- Though Egypt - an ancient civilization and a pivotal Middle Eastern state - was, in relative terms, over-researched on foreign policy studies in comparison to other Arab states as a 1990 professional survey showed, it is, no doubt, under-researched in global comparative terms. Most particularly, studies covering Egypt's foreign policy under President Hosni Mubarak (1981-) are significantly scarce.

2- Except for a few solid and sophisticated studies, most previous treatments came closer to journalistic pieces than to conceptually-oriented academic studies. Others were mere propaganda with no sufficient credibility to be reckoned with.

The Evolution of Foreign Policy Analysis: Overview

The study of foreign policy is not something new. Since time immemorial, people have been interested in studying the relations and interactions that take place among different political units (tribes, groups, nations, nation-states….etc). Since the 1950s, however, a major development became associated with this phenomenon: the attempts of a group of scholars to develop these studies into a coherent field of study. The pioneering scholars who embarked on

the ambitious task of delineating the borders of the field have been referred to as "the first generation"[2].

The first generation wave of scholarship was basically composed of a small number of analysts whose essential goal was "the construction of a rigorous body of research that would together form a united "field""[3]. The primary focus was on "what" drives states to act the way they do. The major contribution of scholars like Snyder, Rosenau and Brecher was to move previous attempts, basically atheoretical and descriptive, to be conceptually-based and methodologically-rich. Moreover, an attempt was made to identify the field as a "normal science" (i.e. "a scientific field with a central general or grand theory around which research proceeded using a common strategy of inquiry or methodology"[4]).

The first generation scholarship laid the foundations of the field, and that has certainly paved the way for succeeding generations. As such, it made a great contribution towards a better understanding of inter-state behavior. Yet, its efforts were plagued with a number of defects:

1- The findings of comparative politics and their relevance to the understanding of foreign policy analysis were discounted. Hence, "relegating domestic political factors to a position of secondary importance"[5] was one of the first generation production's pitfalls.
2- The field was dominated by a Western paradigm. Most attention was given to US - and Western - cases. Other sub-systems were seriously neglected.
3- The feverish attempts to devise a "grand theory" applicable everywhere and at any time were unrealistic, even naïve.

As a result, it became apparent that "the first generation's work has been important but remains incomplete"[6]. Inevitably, a second generation rose to bridge the gap and complete the unfinished mission. The role of the second generation is vividly explained by Neack et al in their illuminating work: *Foreign Policy Analysis: Continuity and Change in its Second Generation*:

"A second generation follows on the existence of and builds upon the efforts of its predecessor. A second generation is nurtured by and relies upon the strengths of its predecessor. A second generation carries on the work of a first generation and passes along the heritage to a potential third generation. At the same time, a second generation is distinct

from a first generation……(It) speaks to those things that have been overlooked or not completed by the first generation"[7].

The second generation represents, therefore, "a different way of thinking about the study of foreign policy"[8].

The move from the first to the second generation was facilitated by the waning of the hegemony of positivism in Comparative Politics and International Relations and thus, as a byproduct**,** in foreign policy analysis. Meanwhile, a huge number of states - especially in the Third World - gained their independence, giving thereby impetus to scholarly interest in non-Western states. Likewise, the fact that the power of the newly independent states was not necessarily military in nature (e.g. oil-exporting states) gave rise to interest in new issues like economic development, dependency, nation-building….etc, all of which lie outside the umbrella of the conventional realist paradigm.

Second-generation foreign policy scholarship is characterized by the following:

1- Various methodologies are used including both quantitative and qualitative research techniques.

2- "(T)he need for a paradigmatic core and central methodology is rejected"[9].

3- Simple connections are discarded and complex interactions between foreign policy players are considered.

4- Domestic determinants of foreign policy behavior are accounted for and attention is given to non-Western cases.

5- Second generation scholars "are conscious of the contextual parameters of their work and explicitly seek to link their research to the major substantive concerns in foreign policy"[10].

Literature Review:

Foreign Policy Decision-Making Process

Foreign policy analysis is much wider in scope than merely studying foreign policy decisions. In the words of prominent scholar Bahgat Korany:

"Decisions are only one part of a country's foreign policy. They can be the most visible, dramatic, and newsworthy events in this context, but they are by no means the totality of foreign policy….A country's foreign policy, on the contrary, is a continuous, wider phenomenon, embracing general objectives, stated strategy, and a series of routine actions:

trade exchanges, cultural encounters, exchange of diplomatic notes…..decisions are best analyzed as part of this amorphous whole"[11].

Knowing that a country's foreign policy includes political alliances, strategic decisions, diplomatic encounters, economic relations and cultural exchanges, the main challenge is to *identify* certain polices (or decisions) that *represent* the overall attitude of the country's foreign relations or *correspond* to that specific aspect of its foreign relations that the research is focusing upon.

The existing literature on foreign policy decision-making is dominated by two major schools: The Psychological-Perceptual School and The Bureaucratic-Organizational School.

1- The Psychological School

The notions of this school were first articulated in the 1950s by Richard Snyder and a number of his colleagues and were expressed in the form of a book entitled *Foreign Policy Decision-Making* in 1962. Snyder et al offered a decision-making model that was well-received among both the academia and politicians; the term decision-making, as a matter of fact, gained popularity and has been used excessively since then in different contexts.

Snyder emphasized in his model the role of the psychological environment. Images, perceptions and beliefs of the foreign policy elite are believed to have a direct bearing on the nature of decisions taken. According to Snyder and Paige, "we make a basic choice to take as our prime analytical objective the recreation of the 'social world' of the decision-makers as they view it. Our task is to devise a conceptual scheme which will help us to reconstruct the situation as defined by the decision-makers"[12]. The assumption, therefore, is that "decision-makers respond not to the real world but to their perceptions and images of this world, which may or may not be accurate representations of that world reality"[13]. Snyder's contribution was succeeded by other attempts that followed the same logic. The works of Boulder, Brecher and Holsti are all premised on the distinction between the "operational" and "psychological" environments.

Despite its analytical usefulness, the psychological school suffers from a major limitation. The focus on the psychological environment, as Korany noted, leads to the "quasi-exclusion of the operational environment, the real world, which is replaced by the decision-

maker's perception of the world"[14]. As such, the approach suffers from reductionism and one-sidedness, a severe drawback hindering it from truly explaining the world's complexities.

2- The Bureaucratic-Organizational School

This school developed in response to the defects of the psychological school. Two specific modifications were made: the decision-makers category included top bureaucrats and decisions taken were not seen anymore as a choice but as an outcome of the process. "State action is not a deliberate choice ─rational or otherwise─ but an outcome"[15]. In other words, and as Graham Allison noted, it is not why a nation did X. Rather it is "why did X happen?"[16]

Allison's outstanding *Essence of Decision* is the most famous work advocating such views. Yet, he was not the school's only promoter. Halperin's *Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy*, Hilsman's *Politics of Policy-Making in Defense and Foreign Affairs* and other works by Richard Neustadt and I. M. Destler followed the same path.

Allison uses three conceptual lenses to examine the Cuban missile crisis of 1962. The first is the rational actor model which views the state as a "unitary value-maximizing actor". Government actions are explained "in terms of the means a rational person would adopt to achieve his or her ends"[17]. Allison reveals how such assumptions are unrealistic. Governments, he agues, "are *not* individuals……but, rather, are clusters of organizations that act on imperfect information under pressure of time, and that decide not on the best choice but on the reasonably satisfactory one in the light of their established routines or standard operating procedures"[18]. Showing that, Allison provides two alternative models: the organizational process model and the bureaucratic politics model. The basic assumption of both is that the plurality of players involved in the decision-making process and their various - often clashing - interests determine the final outcome. In other words, compromise not choice shapes the final decision taken.

The two schools seem to be positioned at both ends of the spectrum. According to Korany:

"if the psychological paradigm has gone to one extreme by singling out the weight of the president's personality dispositions and idiosyncrasies, the bureaucratic politics model has gone to the other extreme by underestimating, if not negating, the president's influence"[19].

Moreover, the bureaucratic politics model suffers from two additional limitations. First, its conception of politics is confined to the political elite. Societal factors are totally

absent; no mention, for example, was made of the possible impact of interest groups, public opinion or the press on the decision-making process. Second, the model originated in the study of the US and for it to have utility in studying other countries would require considerable modification, and in the Third world context, an appreciation of the weakness of bureaucratic institutionalization and the power of the patrimonial practices associated with personal leadership of the leader. In this thesis I will consider the political elites around the president in this manner.

3- Third Way?

I agree with Korany's questioning of the psychological school's validity in explaining foreign policy behavior. The approach's "reductionism verging on mono-variable analysis… (is) a major handicap in any serious endeavor at theory building"[20]. Yet, the problem here is that each of the two established paradigms (despite their important revelations and interesting insights) is inadequate on its own of explaining foreign policy conduct in the Third World. Thus, an *alternative* model is needed**.** The two models would, first of all, have to be combined since the decision-making process includes *both* the leader and the bureaucratic-like interests incorporated into his regime. Second, while Korany does not offer an alternative model, he does call for less dependence on psychological variables and more attention to the "operational" environment. Neither of the decision-making oriented models adequately conceptualizes this environment. Hence a wider specification of the context in which decision-making takes place is necessary, that is, the domestic and external arenas of the state, and above all the threats and insecurity originating from them.

Insecurity in the Third World:

The meaning of foreign policy adopted in this study follows the simple straightforward definition formulated by Brian White. To him, foreign policy is:

"*that area of governmental activity which is concerned with relationships between the state and other actors, particularly states, in the international system*"[21].

The term 'Third World' was coined by the economist Alfred Sauvy in an article published in August 1952 in the French magazine L'Observateur. It became particularly popular during the Cold War, when the United States and its Western allies constituted the 'first world', and the communist bloc headed by the Soviet Union denoted the 'second world'.

Countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America who, in the 1950s and 1960s, gained their independence were regarded as part of the 'Third World'.

After the end of the Cold War, the term has been seen by some analysts as irrelevant and useless. Nevertheless, it is still in use by many other scholars. Some idioms, arguably, acquire over time connotations that survive on, even if the reasons for their initial existence were no longer valid. In this research, I use the term to refer to developing countries with political structures that foster authoritarianism, centralized rule and an almost chronic legitimacy deficit. Countries, whose political and economic liberalization processes helped them get rid of these characteristics, do not, in my understanding, belong to the Third World anymore.

The concept of security has conventionally been confined to protection from threats to a state that emanate from outside its borders, and that are military in nature and require thus a military response. In the 1940s, Walter Lippmann explained that: "a nation is secure to the extent to which it is not in danger of having to sacrifice core values, if it wishes to avoid war, and is able, if challenged, to maintain them by victory in such a war."[22] Similarly, the *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* defined security as "the ability of a nation to protect its internal values from external threats."[23] In other words, security was tantamount to the protection of a state's interests and its core values against external threats.

In the context of the Third World, however, a definition of security should be widened to account for the myriad internal and external threats facing these states. I adopt the definition used by Mohamed Ayoob in *The Third World Security Predicament*:

"security-insecurity is defined in relation to vulnerabilities—*both internal and external*—that threaten to have the potential to bring down or weaken state structures, both territorial and institutional, and governing regimes. According to this definition, the more a state or regime…leans toward the invulnerable end of the vulnerable-invulnerable continuum, the more secure it will be."[24]

Acknowledging the multifaceted nature of security notwithstanding, the concept of security is confined in this research to its political connotation. Other realms of societal activity (economic, ecological…etc) are only significant if they start to affect the political realm.

Balance of threat

In his enlightening work *The Origin of Alliances*, Stephen Walt proceeds from a traditional realist stand to explain the sources of alliances among states, yet he slightly modifies it to gain a more accurate picture of the factors statesmen consider before making alliances. Thus, instead of the traditional balance of power theory advocated by the realist school of thought, he recommends an alternative "balance of threat" conception. According to him, "it is more accurate to say that states tend to ally with or against the foreign power that poses the greatest threat. For example, states may balance by allying with other strong states if a weaker state is more dangerous for other reasons"[25]. The level of threat is determined by four factors: aggregate power, geographical proximity, offensive power and aggressive intentions.

1- Aggregate Power

The larger a state's total resources, the greater the threat it can pose to other states. Resources such as population, military and industrial capabilities, economic development, and technological advancement contribute to the aggregate power of any state.

2- Geographical Proximity

The closer a state is, the higher the threat it poses because, naturally, the ability to use power declines with distance. States thus have always been concerned with neighbors than with distant powers. It could be argued that technological innovations have put an end to such perceptions. Ballistic missiles have a range of thousands of miles and satellite channels transmitted somewhere on earth can cover the whole globe. Nevertheless, it is erroneous to assume that geography is no longer part of the calculations of leaders.

3- Offensive Power

All else being equal, "states with large offensive capabilities are more likely to provoke an alliance than are those that are incapable of attacking", argues Walt. Offensive power is defined by Walt as "the ability to threaten the sovereign or territorial integrity of another state at an acceptable cost"[26].

4- Aggressive Intentions

States with aggressive intentions, real or perceived, provoke other states to balance against them. Even states with only moderate capabilities may induce others to balance

against them if their intensions were considered aggressive. Hence, perceptions of intent play a major role in the choice of allies (and foes).

National Security: Many Faces

In the same vein of Walt's approach, the informative book: *The Many Faces of National Security in the Arab World*, written by prominent scholars Bahgat Korany, Paul Noble and Rex Brynen provides a critique of the conventional realist paradigm and the way it perceives the concept of national security. The authors question the validity of the traditional power school of international relations for its "simplicity" and "one-dimensionness" and attempt, at the same time, to reformulate its basic concepts by widening its scope to incorporate intra-state conflicts along with the much-focused upon inter-state conflicts.

To them, the traditional realist paradigm is "incomplete and even misleading. It is misleading because its seductive simplicity…..has lulled observers into a partial understanding of world complexities, thereby distracting researchers from a multi-dimensional approach to the international system."[27]. As they explain:

"For both classicists and contemporaries, generalists and regionalists, national security is the defence against military or external threats, perceived or real, potential or immediate. If there is a theory of 'national security', it is geopolitical in orientation and its main philosophical assumptions are those of the realist school of power politics"[28].

But states, they argue, are certainly not the sole actors on the world stage, nor are they always the most important ones. "Is Yemen, or Somalia…..really more important than Shell, Exxon, or General Motors?"[29]. Therefore, "(a) multicentric or transnational view of the international system….provides a more comprehensive explanatory framework for the study of international relations"[30].

The authors contend that realism suffers from two basic deficiencies. First, "its conception of international relations…..is based on a separation rather than a distinction between internal and international politics"[31]. Second, the distinction between 'high' politics concerned with outside threats against which the state uses forces to defend itself, and 'low' politics, concerned with the less threatening internal environment, is flawed. In cases of bloody ethnic conflicts or overwhelming famine, the survival of the state itself could be at stake. In this case, "does not low politics really become high politics?"[32]. In the Arab world,

moreover, one can clearly witness the "interconnectedness and overlapping – rather than the separation – between internal and international politics"[33].

Yet, instead of discarding the realist model altogether, the authors build on what they consider still valid while, in the same time, fixing the existing defects; "(i)nstead of discarding the established paradigm, we attempt to build on what is valid in it while balancing its skewedness and one-dimensionality"[34].

Furthermore, the authors note that the Arab world - and probably the whole Third World - is characterized by two basic features: internal fragility and external vulnerability.

Internal Fragility:

The artificial state formation process in the Arab world led to a chronic state of precariousness and instability. The "imposition of an (alien) state structure on a (forged) nation" had serious implications: "*the impression of a state at war with its own society* (the chronic problem of political instability), and also that society at war with itself (the praetorian society[35])"[36] (emphasis added).

External Vulnerability:

Economic dependency is as much threatening to regimes and states as military threats, if not more. In the 19th century, Egypt was occupied because of its acute debt problem. Today, economic dependency poses a serious threat to internal stability (shaken many times by food riots in the Arab world) and state sovereignty (autonomy from outside powers).

Internal Security: The Most Important Face of Security in the Third World

The distinguished scholar Mohamed Ayoob argues in his book: *The Third World Security Predicament: State Making, Regional Conflict, and the International System* that "a paradigm that does not make security its centerpiece will lack adequate power to explain the domestic or international behavior of Third World states"[37]. He contends, moreover, that the notion of state making should be the point of departure for any such study. The short amount of time Third World states have had to build their states (compared, for example, with their European counterparts), as well as their late entry into the international system, along with the disruptive colonial heritage are responsible for the high sense of insecurity felt by these states/regimes. This feeling is not confined to small states, but includes also the large regional

powers: "insecurity is the defining characteristic of Third World states ─even those such as China, India, or Brazil that may boast significant amounts of hardware capability"[38].

Ayoob emphasizes the primacy of internal factors in the sense of insecurity felt by Third World leaders:

> "The Third World's security problematic can be described as a multilayered cake in which the flavors have mingled; even though each layer has maintained its own distinctive flavor, it has lost its purity by mixing with the other flavors. The three main layers of this cake are the domestic, regional and global dimensions of security……the primary dimension —the layer that flavors the entire cake—is the domestic one"[39].

In other words, he does not negate the fact that regional and international conditions play a role but believes that this role is secondary to that played by internal factors.

Ayoob's brilliant book is another attempt to discredit the conventional realist wisdom and prove its inadequacy of understanding the security predicament of Third World states. Not only does realism ignore internal threats, but these threats are also the most important ones and thus worth the greatest attention. Third World elites are "preoccupied, if not obsessed, by state and regime security, and they shape their policies accordingly"[40]. Said differently, "*security considerations dominate domestic as well as the foreign policies of Third World states*"[41](emphasis added).

Regime Security

Regime security is defined by Mohammad Mohamedou, the Research Director at the International Council on Human Rights Policy, as "the idiosyncratic set of dispositions, orientations and strategies of a particular regime as it seeks to maintain its physical presence, establish and perpetuate legitimacy, and further its permanent and ad hoc interests"[42]. According to Mohamedou, four ways are used to realize regime security: (i) power consolidation, (ii) economic viability, (iii) maintenance of legitimacy, and (iv) external and internal threat diffusion.

1- Power Consolidation

To ensure their survival, regimes "take control of the political situation and…structure state power around the core of the regime"[43]. This is often most prevalent during the initial period after seizing power when the situation is volatile but is certainly not limited to it. Whenever

new threats (internal or external) loom high, a regime will try to reaffirm its power. Generally, "the greater the threat is, the more significant and urgent the effort will be"[44].

2- Economic Viability

This element corresponds to the economic test of the regime. On the whole, survival of the regime is closely linked with its ability to provide adequate economic services to its population. Failure on this front could bring about the breakdown of the regime.

3- Maintenance of Legitimacy

Maintaining legitimacy "is an essential goal for a regime"[45]. Legitimacy links the actions and values of the regime to the idea that the masses entertain of the state.

4- Threat Diffusion

This factor, argues Mohamedou, "constitutes the core of regime security"[46]. It means "providing the regime with an adequate margin of security primarily staving off any danger to (i) its existence, (ii) its actions, and (iii) the values attached to its identity"[47]. Deflecting threats is thus "the main agenda of the regime security dynamic"[48]. Mohamedou acknowledges that threats take multiple forms: political, economic, social, external, internal, global, long-term, short-term, isolated, pervasive…etc. "It becomes a crucial test, then, to know which threats are more important"[49].

The first three factors entail predominantly using domestic policies whereas the fourth factor entails employing both domestic and foreign policies. The following section sheds light on which threats are more menacing to a Third World regime's security and clarifies the method by which these regimes respond to them.

National Interest

This brings in the concept of the 'national interest' which is typically expected to shape foreign policy in the view of classical realism. Emphasizing the anarchic nature of the international society and the dominance of security in the calculations of states, realists and neo-realists maintained that only policies concerned with the rational management of power serve the national interest. Political realism's father, Hans Morgenthau, argued that "the main signpost that helps political realism to find its way through the landscape of international politics is the concept of interest defined in terms of power."[50] To Morgethau, statesmen "must think in terms of the national interest, conceived as power among powers."[51] Similarly,

Kenneth Waltz asserts that "to say that a country acts according to its national interest means that, having examined its security requirements, it tries to meet them."[52]

Other important objectives have been added to the realist's conception of the national interest, narrowly delimited to its security and physical survival, such as the well-being of the economy and the preservation of the society's order. The list was even expanded to include other goals, such as "national aggrandizement", "prestige"[53] and "glory"[54]. Another approach equated the national interest with governmental policy. For example, Edgar Furniss and Richard Snyder maintain that the national interest "is what the nation, i.e., the decision makers, decide it is."[55] In the same vein, Fred Sonderman wrote that "the best and perhaps the only available procedure may be to take the official definition and the policy output as the basis for our understanding."[56] Similarly, Samuel Huntington defines the public interest "in terms of the concrete interests of the governing institutions."[57]

Frequently used by scholars and practitioners notwithstanding, little agreement has been reached on the definition of the concept and the methods used to delineate it. Despite these differences, scholars agreed about the following:

1- The core values of the national interest include the nations' security, the preservation of its territorial integrity and its material welfare. Power, security and wealth are what states want. As one analyst put it, "the national interests of all states are broadly similar. They are centred upon the welfare of the nation and the preservation of its political doctrine and national style of life."[58]

2- The national interest should concern the interests of the whole nation. To that effect, it must transcend the specific interests of social classes, political parties, factions, officeholders, etc. This is not always the case, however. As Nincic put it, "foreign policy is not necessarily rooted in the national interest…it may reflect purely parochial interest, including those of the government itself"[59]. These policies do not fulfill the national interest. According to Krasner, "the preferences of central decision-makers must not be directed solely to their own personal interests, if they are to be termed the national interest."[60]

Surely, many actions carried out by states serve the national interest as a whole in addition to the parochial interests of decision-makers. For example, policies that encourage economic development are, obviously, in the interest of the entire nation, and also of state leaders who would use it to bolster their rule and reinforce their legitimacy. Also, defense

against foreign invaders protects the territorial integrity of the state as well as the survival of its regime. In other situations, however, leaders might pursue policies that serve their interests at the expense of the national interest. In fact, modern history is replete with examples of leaders going to war to thwart domestic opponents and maintain their rule, when chances of winning were clearly minimal.

In non-democratic states, the link between policy and national interest is weaker than in states with formidable institutions, deep-rooted democratic traditions and means of accountability. In non-democratic states, leaders and elites could more easily dispense with the national interest without being held accountable by the public or any of the state's institutions.

3- Foreign policy durability and consistency provide important insights. It is true that new information could trigger a change in policy, but, in the broad lines, this usually unfolds in a gradual fashion, evolving over a long period of time. Abandoning a foreign policy goal that has been perceived by successive governments as conducive to the national interest could imply a violation of it. Similarly, an action that is inconsistent, or even contradictive, with the general line of policy adopted by a government could imply a breach of national interest.

This is not to say that the persistence and coherence of policy guarantees the upholding of the national interest. It merely suggests that in cases of durability and coherency, especially in open societies, the national interest is, more often than not, safeguarded.

4- An element of soft power is good for any nation. The power to attract others helps a country obtain the outcomes it wants in world politics. Reputation, credibility, prestige and legitimacy are sources of soft power, and, hence, part of the national interest equation.

To sum up, to say that a state's foreign policy is serving the national interest, two factors should be present: that core values are preserved; and that policies do not favor the interests of any group at the expense of the nation. Coherence and a sense of persistence across different governments/regimes suggest the preservation of the national interest.

Arguably we can conceptualize the interests shaped and served by foreign policy on a continuum with "regime interest or security" at one end and "national interest/security" at the other, allowing for the possibility of middle or mixed cases in which the two overlap to one degree or another. Foreign policy is more likely to serve the national interest where levels of institutionalization are high, specifically where there are democratic or at least mass-

incorporating political intuitions and where bureaucratic institutions guard a durable conception of the national interest against the idiosyncrasies of the leader and where shared national identity allows some consensus between regime and people on the national interest. Where these are absent regime and national interest is more likely to diverge, above all because regimes may feel threatened from within and leader's idiosyncrasies may disproportionately shape outcomes.

Following on the previous discussion, it could be argued that maintaining Egypt's national interest requires fulfilling a number of criteria. The preservation of its territorial integrity comes first. Crucial to almost any country's national interest, this factor acquires additional importance in Egypt because of clear historical reasons. Egypt has been colonized for thousands of years by various foreign forces and only gained full independence in the 20th century. Also, Egypt is seen by many as the oldest nation-state in the world, for its borders have, essentially, remained the same for millennia. Any sacrifice of these gains, in my opinion, damages Egypt's national interest.

Second, the material wellbeing of the country is vital for its national interest, particularly on the economic front. Messing with scarce economic sources or promoting policies that serve the haves at the expense of the have-nots will only aggravate the sufferings of the majority of its people, and are thus not in the 'national' interest of Egypt.

Third, Egypt's huge reservoir of 'soft power' (that is the power to attract) in the Arab world makes it crucial to promote that power and invest in it. Egypt's political weight and cultural appeal are assets that should be used to retain its unique political stature in the region and the world at large.

Omnibalancing: How Leaders Act

In an attempt to explain the foreign policy attitude of Third World states, especially alignment, the prominent scholar Steven David presents what he calls the "omnibalancing" theory. The theory relies upon some of the key assumptions of the balance of power theory while correcting some of its pitfalls so as to become useful in a Third World context. Two alterations in particular comprise the cornerstone of David's omnibalancing: the need to take internal threats into consideration and the need to make the leader of the state rather than the state itself the main level of analysis.

Internal Threats

Rather than focusing on external threats and neglecting internal ones as the balance of power logic dictates, omnibalancing, in accordance with the analysis of Ayoob, Korany, Noble and Brynen, respects the multifaceted nature of the threats facing Third World states. Not only that, but it assumes that internal threats - in light of the chronic legitimacy problem Third World states suffer from and the huge post-independence challenges they face - are often more dangerous and threatening to the leader's hold on power than are external threats. To be able to explain alignment decisions made by Third World states, balance of power has to be broadened to incorporate such vital threats.

Leader as Unit of Analysis

Omnibalancing asserts that the dominant objective of Third World leaders is to stay in power. Therefore, the most powerful determinant of a Third World state's foreign policy is its leader's deep interest in political survival. As a result, these leaders "will sometimes protect themselves at the expense of the interest of the state"[61].

According to the balance of power theory, a leader will ask himself: "How does this policy affect the power of the state?" In contrast, omnibalancing assumes that the decision-maker will ask "How does this policy affect the probability of *my* remaining in power?"[62] If the interests of the state clash with the interests of the leader, the latter will worry more about his own interests. According to David, "when a leadership is confronted with a choice between aligning so as to benefit the state but endangering its hold on power or aligning in such a way that harms the state but preserves its power, it will choose the latter"[63]. Consequently, understanding why leaders in the Third World take the decisions they do requires an understanding of "what is in the best interests of the leaders and not of what is in the best interests of the state"[64].

Having noted that Third World states generally face multiple threats from different sources (some internal, some external), omnibalancing moves to explain the way a Third World leader will deal with these threats to ensure his survival. The general assumption is that lesser challenges will be appeased in order to withstand principal ones. Since domestic threats are more likely to challenge a leader's hold on power than international threats, Third World leaders are expected to align with outside powers "(which often pose less pressing threats) in order to counter the more immediate and dangerous domestic threats. They seek to split the

alignment against them and focus their energies on their most dangerous (domestic) opponents"[65].

Two case studies were used by David to illustrate his theory: the decision of Ethiopia's Mengistu to align with the Soviet Union after seizing power in 1974 and Egypt's Sadat decision to align with the United States in the aftermath of the October war. In the case of Mengistu, David notes that the Ethiopian leader realized that he could not survive in power without adequately coping with the rebels of the province of Eritrea. Accordingly, "gaining outside assistance to suppress the rebellion played a major role in his turn to the Soviet Union"[66].

Again, in the second case, Sadat's political survival was not actually threatened by its major external foe (Israel), but rather by Egyptian workers, students and intellectuals who had grown impatient with the military stalemate and the continuation of the occupation of Egyptian land. "For Sadat to deal with the threats from the Egyptian groups, he had to force Israel to return the lands it had seized"[67]. In other words, Sadat aligned with the United States because he recognized that, unlike the Soviet Union, it could, indeed, force Israel to end its occupation of the Sinai, the only remedy to the mounting frustration of Sadat's domestic opponents.

The two cases show that omnibalancing, and not balance of power, better explains alignment decisions made by Third World leaders. Both Mengistu and Sadat "appeased an international threat….in order to defeat a more pressing domestic challenge"[68].

Unfortunately, David's cases only dealt with an international threat, whose power is overwhelming. But outside threats are not all like that. It stands to reason that threats by regional powers are less dangerous than those posed by superpowers, whose vast political and economic capabilities entice smaller powers to bandwagon. On the other hand, regional powers could be more threatening because of their geographical proximity. It is imperative, thus, to identify the *'level of threat'* of each case. Large outside threats that could not be balanced are appeased, just like Sadat and Mengistu did. Less pressing outside threats are, if possible, balanced. Walt's identification of the level of threats, one shall not forget, included the factors of 'aggregate power' and 'offensive power', which means that, even though 'balance of threat' replaces the conventional 'balance of power', power calculations are not absent altogether from judging the level of threat.

Conclusions

The review of the previous sources leads to the following conclusions:

1- States balance against threats rather than power. Threats are determined by four factors: aggregate power, geographical proximity, offensive power and, most importantly, aggressive intentions.
2- National Security has many faces. The source of threat need not be necessarily external as the traditional realist paradigm suggests.
3- In the Third World, internal threats are usually more pressing and dangerous than external threats.
4- In order to maintain their existence in a multi-threat environment, Third World leaders omnibalance (i.e. appease secondary threats to focus their energies on the more threatening internal security challenges).

Theoretical Framework:

Like all realists, Stephen Walt does not pay attention to internal threats to states; the prime unit of analysis in his conception is the state that seeks alignment to protect itself from 'external' threats. Still, his refinement of 'balance of power' into 'balance of threat' offers valuable insights. The level of threat rationale that is not solely dependent on power calculations could be effectively used, therefore, with regards to both internal and external threats.

David recognizes the peculiar nature of Third World states and the dangerous environment they operate in which exposes them to myriad internal and external threats. Nevertheless, his theory suffers from two major limitations. First, his generalization of the attitude of Third World leaders is not convincing. The idiosyncrasies of leaders in greatly centralized regimes impact the choice of national goals and the way these objectives are pursued. Arguing, thus, that *all* Third World leaders have the same aims and aspirations is implausible. A quick look at post-independence Middle East politics reveals that equating Egypt's Nasser with Iraq's Nuri, or Libya's Ghaddafi with Saudi Arabia's monarchs is too much of a simplification. Regime survival is the bottom-line objective of all of them, but it is by no means the *only* objective sought.

Second, arguing that domestic threats are always more dangerous than external threats is refuted by empirical evidence, particularly in the Middle East where there have been more wars than in other Third World regions. A military invasion by a foreign power that encroaches upon the territorial integrity of a state is, certainly, a far greater threat than the subversive activities of domestic opposition. Similarly, the pressure exerted by superpowers are often more dangerous than the plots of local opponents.

Despite these drawbacks, the notion of 'omnibalancing' makes good sense for several reasons. First, faced with multiple threats, a state would find it difficult to balance all of them. The military and economic capabilities of most Third World states are limited, if not meager. Balancing all enemies is extremely costly, and, therefore, ruled out as a viable option.

Second, the fact that internal opponents are frequently backed by external patrons makes breaking that link a high priority in the quest for security. So, appeasing outside patrons in exchange for cutting their assistance to domestic rivals seems like a working strategy.

At a general level, therefore, omnibalancing provides a reasonable point of departure to understanding the response of Third World states to multi-threat environments. But omnibalancing could take place in different ways. Some leaders, as David showed, appease outside threats and crush domestic rivals. Yet, some others do the exact opposite: appease domestic political forces and balance against external threats. For most of the 1950s and 1960s, Nasser defied the West and appeased his constituency—in Egypt and the Arab world. So, it is important to discern why these variations take place.

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To know which course of action states take in response to combinations of internal and external threats, a number of variables ought to be considered. The first is the level of threat posed. Generally speaking, one would expect Third World states to appease high levels of external threats. As noted before, the military and economic capabilities of the vast majority of Third World countries are meager, and their ability to withstand threats posed by strong and aggressive parties (e.g. superpowers) is limited. Bandwagoning here would be most likely. During the cold war, almost all Third World states were dependent on one superpower. Also, in the post-Cold War era, a large number of these states have been tied to the United States, the only superpower in international politics. On the other hand, lower levels of threats posed by less powerful and less aggressive external forces could be balanced.

In some cases, however, high levels of threats emanate from the inside. Indeed, bereft of legitimacy, overwhelmed with economic difficulties and contaminated with religious, racial and political rivalries, the Third World state breeds opposition and dissidence at alarming rates. In such cases, omnibalancing takes a different form. Prior to the 1967 war, King Hussein of Jordan allied with Nasser (his lifetime foe) against Israel, even though he anticipated it would cost his kingdom the West Bank. Presiding over a population of a majority of Palestinians, Hussein realized that his state and throne would be at stake if he opposed Nasser's pan-Arab tide. Accordingly, he appeased his local constituency to keep them intact.

Two factors are worth attention here. First, appeasing internal threats is not always possible, for, sometimes, it is tantamount to political suicide. Secessionist groups and underground movements that seek overthrowing the regime (e.g. Islamic groups, radical Marxists) could be hardly appeased. Appeasing external threats, certainly, carries a cost (e.g. political independence), but that's easier to accept than suicide.

Second, one has to remember that power is a relative term. So the power of other parties is determined vis-à-vis one's one power. And, since in many Third World states, the state is much more powerful than its domestic opponents, balancing against domestic dissidents is more common.

Therefore, one could conclude that higher levels of threats are appeased, whereas low levels of threat are balanced. And in most cases, the former are external threats, and the latter internal threats.

On the regional level, the choice of strategy depends on the availability of reliable allies. At a very general level, the more allies a state could rely on to oppose a particular threat, the higher the probability of balancing. Conversely, the fewer allies a state has in a particular context, the higher the probability of bandwagoning.

These assumptions follow the logic that the assistance of other states will enhance one's security against the threat it is facing and, hence, encourage balancing it. The absence of such partners, however, makes balancing difficult and costly, thus encouraging bandwagoning.

On the domestic level, some other factors are worth attention:

1. Idiosyncrasies of Leader

The idiosyncrasies of the leader play a major role in shaping foreign policy. This is true everywhere. In fact, many accounts have referred to the influence of President George W. Bush's religious beliefs on the conduct of U.S. foreign policy. But they acquire an additional leverage in the Third World, where governance is often too centralized and personalized. Saddam Hussein is a good case in point. Relying on force with neighbors, miscalculating the response of superpowers and messing with the rich resources of his country, he transformed Iraq from a major regional *player* to the favorite *playground* of many regional and international players. Over-reliance on force was evident in Saddam's political career that, from the onset, has been characterized by endless bloody faction-ridden confrontations, coups, reprisals, etc.

Thus, a look at the personality of the leader, his attitudes, socialization and worldviews helps in understanding the policies he pursues.

2. Type of Leadership

The type of leadership offers additional insights into the causes of foreign policy behavior. Max Weber's oft-cited typology of forms of authority included in *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* distinguishes between three kinds of authority: Rational-legal, traditional and charismatic.

1- Rational-legal Authority

Authority here rests on the belief in the legality of rules and the right of those in power under such rules to make commands. In such systems, authority is handed over to people by virtue of offices they occupy. These individuals maintain their legitimacy as long as they retain their offices; their authority is lost once they leave office.

Political systems associated with this kind of authority have hierarchical organizations of officials, constitutions, laws, written documents and established offices.

2- Traditional Authority

Under traditional authority, legitimacy of the leader is based on custom (i.e. passed on from the past). The legitimacy of royalties, clan leaders and family heads is established on the sanctity of traditions, and is preserved as long as their authority is not challenged. Traditional authority predominantly governed pre-modern societies, but still exists today.

3- Charismatic Authority

This type of authority takes place when controlling others is exercised by virtue of an individual's distinctiveness. It rests, thus, "on devotion to the specific and exceptional sanctity, heroism or exemplary character of an individual person."[69]

Whether born out of suffering or enthusiasm, charismatic leaders believe that they are on a 'mission' of change. Hence, charisma "is the greatest revolutionary force."[70] In the twentieth century, charismatic leadership found in the Third World a fertile soil. Nasser, Castro, Nkrumah and Khomeini, to name a few, capitalized on the sufferings and aspirations of their constituencies and used their charismatic authority to introduce great changes to their states and regions.

A number of implications follow this classification:

1- These types are usually not found in "pure" form. In reality, a mixture of different types is more common. In modern times, for example, both traditional and charismatic leaderships exist in bureaucratic systems that embody many of the features of legal authority.

2- Since the authority of charismatic leaders is dependent on their followers' belief in their 'heroic' actions, these leaders constantly need to demonstrate their leadership performance to retain their legitimacy and consolidate it.

3- Charismatic authority is, more often than not, committed to a platform of change, ranging from the limited adjustment of some domestic and foreign policies to the complete restructuring of the old political system. On the other hand, traditional and rational-legal authorities are mostly keen on preserving the status-quo.

4- The existence (or absence) of democracy impacts the way different features of different forms of authority interact. For instance, the rational-legal authority imports some of the characteristics of the traditional authority when democratic rule and regulations of accountability are absent, such as the development of patronage networks and the violation of rules and laws by the chief.

3. Interests of the Ruling Coalition

The interests of the ruling coalition affect foreign policy in two ways: the initial choice of goals, and the selection of the best means to achieve these goals. The study of elites is premised on the understanding that "societal power is concentrated in elite groups that control

the resources of key social institutions"[71] Classical theorists of elites (e.g. Mosca, Pareto) agree that in any society, a minority (called a "political class" or "governing elite") governs the rest of the society. This elite is made up of occupants of political posts and those who could influence the decision-making process.

Influence is not limited to domestic affairs. For instance, the Turkish military establishment's reluctance to open a northern frontier against Iraq in 2003 proved crucial in the Turkish government's ultimate decision to turn down the American offer. The same influence is exerted, in varying degrees, by Syria's Baathists, Iran's Bazaar and Egypt's military establishment. Hence, a look at the ruling coalition, its interests, perceptions, motivations and power is crucial for a better understanding of the dynamics of foreign policy.

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To sum up, the reaction of Third World states to internal and external threats depends on the interplay of the following factors:

1- The level of internal and external threats measured vis-à-vis the state's own capabilities.

2- The availability of regional and international allies.

3- The domestic setting, including the type of leadership, the interests of the ruling coalition and the idiosyncrasies of the leader.

Summary of Hypotheses:

- The foreign policies of Third world states, which tend to be lacking in strong institutions, democracy or national consensus and facing threats from within as well as without, are less likely to be shaped by or serve a national interest than a regime interest.
- The type of reaction of Third World states to internal and external threats depends on the interplay between the level of threat and the type of authority, interests of ruling coalition and leader's idiosyncrasies.
- Third World states facing an alliance (real or perceived) between internal and external threats will balance or omnibalance to oppose the threat, depending on the level of threat.

- All else being equal, the greater the level of external threat, the greater is the tendency to align with it. The lower the level of external threat, the greater is the tendency to balance it.
- The likelihood of balancing outside threats increases with the increase in the availability of reliable allies.
- The idiosyncrasies of leaders of Third World states impact the content and shape of foreign policy.
- The greater the absence of democratic institutions and traditions, the greater is the potential for violating the national interest.
- All else being equal, charismatic leaders appease internal threats and balance outside threats.
- All else being equal, traditional and rational-legal leaders balance internal threats and appease outside threats.

Case Studies

The aim of the thesis is to explain Mubarak's foreign policy according to the above hypotheses and, in particular, to understand and demonstrate the primacy of regime security in it. In choosing case studies, I was faced with the not so straightforward task of selecting cases where the boundaries of national security and regime security are easily identified and separate. Both concepts generally overlap and are in many cases not easily distinguishable and this is exactly what helped numerous Third World leaders mobilize popular support at moments when their own survival (not the nation's survival or security) was at stake by claiming that the whole country is in danger. At moments when the internal situation is exceptionally precarious, an external threat could be totally fabricated to unite the nation and reduce internal political pressure.

Two case studies were chosen to test the above theories: Egypt's reluctance to reestablish diplomatic ties with the Islamic Republic of Iran and Egypt's response to the Greater Middle East Initiative proposed by the Bush administration and the series of Western efforts aimed at promoting political reform in the Middle East, in particular the measures it took to warm up its relations with Israel, including the signing of the QIZ treaty.

1- Egypt's Relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI)

Egypt's diplomatic relations with Iran were severely strained in the aftermath of Iran's Islamic revolution and were officially cut after Egypt hosted the deposed Shah. The relations further deteriorated in light of the massive political and military support given by Egypt to Iraq in its bloody eight-year war with the IRI. Yet, the death of Khomeini and the moderate policies promoted by his successors (Rafsanjani and Khatami) changed the face of Iran and opened prospects for its reintegration into regional and international arenas. Support of terrorism and the notion of "export of revolution" have been relinquished by the new leadership and pragmatism guided its foreign policy. With the exception of the United States and Israel, Iran managed to improve its relations with all countries/regions including European countries, Gulf states, Russia and Turkey. Nevertheless, ties with Egypt have not been reestablished in spite of the IRI's clear interest in mending fences.

Chapter four explores the puzzle of why the Egyptian leadership has been reluctant to restore Egypt's diplomatic relations with Iran despite the immense economic and strategic benefits that could have been reaped of taking such a step. I prove that regime security considerations constituted the major driving force behind the lack of enthusiasm. Foreign policy here became hostage to the interests of the ruling regime who put its own interests above that of the nation.

2- Egypt and Western Reform-Oriented Pressure: Using the Israeli Gateway

Since the events of September 11, the American administration has vigorously attempted to introduce political, economic and cultural reforms to various parts of the Middle East and the Islamic world. The approach was a natural consequence to the assumption of George W. Bush (and his top aides and mentors) that the authoritarian nature of the ruling regimes in this part of the world was responsible for the bloody September attacks. As a result, spreading the Western notions of democracy, pluralism and human rights has been seen in Washington as an essential bulwark against future terrorist attacks. While crude military means were used in the cases of rogue states/regimes like Afghanistan's Taliban (2001) and Saddam's Iraq (2003), political and diplomatic pressures were mainly used with friends and strategic partners like Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Jordan. The Greater Middle East Initiative came to embody the American vision for change in the Middle East.

Chapter Five studies the reaction of the Egyptian government to the endeavors of the US to impose political reform on its political system and shows that the interests of the regime dictated such responses. It proves that the response of the Egyptian regime to what it perceived as a hostile and dangerous attitude entailed the employment of many means, including foreign policy.

With the exception of the initial short "honeymoon", Egypt's relations with Israel remained on the whole tense since the signing of the Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty in 1979. Relations between both countries further deteriorated on the eve of the outbreak of the second *'Intifada'* in September 2000 and the subsequent termination of the Mideast peace process. The Egyptian ambassador was called and normalization was put to a halt. Moreover, the ascendance to power of Ariel Sharon, who is greatly mistrusted in Cairo and the Arab world, convinced the Egyptian leadership that peace was far from sight. Sharon's approach reinforced such convictions; peace negotiations were stopped and his Palestinian peace partner (Yasser Arafat) was locked in his Ramallah headquarters, the Palestinian infrastructure was completely destroyed, assassination squads were given a green light to liquidate Palestinian activists and a high wall was built to secure Israel against the attacks of suicide bombers. In short, peace was dead and no dim light was seen at the end of the tunnel.

Amid this bleak atmosphere, the Egyptian leadership surprisingly took a number of steps aimed at improving its relationship with Tel Aviv. The start came in early December 2004 with the release of a convicted Israeli spy in exchange for six Egyptian students arrested in Israel on suspicions of attempting to undertake terrorist attacks. Ten days later, Egypt, Israel and the United States signed the Qualified Industrial Zones (QIZ) agreement, according to which Egyptian exports are allowed to enter the American market free of duties and customs, provided that at least 11.7% of the exported goods is manufactured in Israel. The step was, to say the least, unexpected given the fact that Egypt has persistently rejected the American-Israeli QIZ program since the year 1996. The astonishment of commentators was multiplied with the unprecedented statements made by President Hosni Mubarak on a Washington trip in which he praised the Israeli Prime Minister and his ability to bring peace to the region, in sheer contradiction with remarks he had made earlier expressing his pessimism about achieving peace while Sharon and the Likud Party hawks are still in power.

Chapter five attempts to explain the puzzling sudden change of heart. It demonstrates that the Egyptian leadership has warmed up its relations with Israel in order to appease the American side and alleviate Washington's increasing demands for political reform. In other words, regime interests dictated the change of behavior with Israel, not national (economic or strategic) interests and foreign policy was the instrument manipulated to achieve that purpose.

The two cases (or puzzles) have something in common: they both involve the usage of foreign policy with an external party whose presence (or interference) could, directly or indirectly, threaten the regime's authority and its chances of remaining in power (Iran with its moral influence upon Egyptian Islamists and the United States with its feverish demands for political reform that could curtail the regime's privileges or ultimately cause its breakdown). But the difference is that the first case entails dealing with a regional power that has been considered as an "enemy" for decades whereas the second requires interacting with a superpower who has been a strategic ally for those same decades. Whether it is "Islamic" Iran or the "liberal" United States, the Egyptian regime felt threatened. The level of threat, however, dictated the way of handling it (i.e. a balancing attitude was used with the former and an indirect maneuver-based approach with the latter). The level of threat, as perceived by Egyptian decision-makers, was much higher in the case of US pressure. Certainly, 'aggressive intentions' were present in both cases. The same could be said about 'geographical proximity', for American troops and military bases are scattered throughout vast areas of the Middle East. But the United States, the world's sole superpower, certainly outweighs Iran in terms of 'aggregate power' and 'offensive power' (both politically and economically). Hence, the level of its threat was seen in Cairo as very high. Therefore, Egypt appeased the Americans, for its leadership reasoned it could not, in effect, balance them. On the other hand, the Iranian threat was milder, and was, therefore, balanced.

Research on Egyptian Foreign Policy: Sailing in Troubled Waters with a Blurred Map

Similar to most developing nations, conducting research on Egypt's foreign policy is not an easy task. Researchers are faced with numerous challenges. First and foremost, they suffer from the pressing problem of scarcity of sources, in particular official documents. The lack of data and the utmost secrecy the foreign policy decision-making process is surrounded with makes the study of a Middle Eastern foreign policy close to "a guessing game, not unlike the

study of past Soviet foreign policy"[72]. Moreover, declassification of documents is still unheard of in the Middle East. Only trusted loyalists are allowed access to governmental archives and documents[73]. Heikal, as Nasser's close friend and not as a political researcher or editor-in-chief of *Al-Ahram*, had the privilege of viewing (and even photocopying) tons of classified documents. This "lack of documentary and archival facilities makes the analysis of decisions (by other less-privileged scholars) very hazardous"[74]. In his study on Egypt's foreign policy towards the Arab World, Abdel-Gawad noticed the absence of not only documents, but also well-defined "policy statements" that could summarize Egypt's basic objectives in the region as seen by its leaders[75]. Other scholars usually encounter similar problems.

Second, researchers are heavily constrained by security concerns. In authoritarian states, leaders are clearly above criticism. Since foreign policy in the Middle East is primarily planned and controlled by the leadership, research finds itself entangled in the "red zone", so it either sacrifices academic honesty, or gets out of this zone to get rid of the critical dilemma. According to Izumi, "Egyptian researchers seem to avoid criticizing specific individuals who bear the responsibility for Egypt's foreign and domestic policies…For most Egyptian researchers, it is safer and more comfortable to concentrate on international issues or theoretical debates"[76]. As long as civic liberties - including freedom of expression - are not guaranteed by the political regime, the problem will persist. What Egypt needs, argues Izumi, is "an environment in which Egyptian researchers freely and publicly debate urgent national issues, not the voluntary confinement of themselves into academic ivory towers"[77]. This kind of environment has eluded the Egyptian academia for decades. In fact, many research centers and various political publications are under direct control of the state. For example, the most influential think tank in Egypt, Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, is unlikely to express anti-regime opinions due to the quasi-official status of Al-Ahram Establishment. *Al-Siyassa Al-Dawliya*, a quarterly periodical focusing on international affairs, is also published by Al-Ahram and suffers from the same fate. In fact, one of the issues of *Al-Siyassa Al-Dawliya* was confiscated in the 1970s when it published an article written about President Sadat by the American ambassador Hermann Eilts[78].

Third, relying on the media is almost futile. In third World countries, the media is "less developed and more "guided" than that in the West…..Even information reported by the international and "elite" press is sometimes of poor quality or low credibility; it may even be

plain incorrect"[79]. The situation in Egypt is no better. Dowek argues that "there is no genuine freedom of press in Egypt and that everything published or broadcast by the media is orchestrated from above in a very minute manner…..The Egyptian information and propaganda setup is comparable to a gigantic octopus. Its arms move in different directions creating the false impression that each arm is a separate entity and has an independent life"[80]. As a result, news is reflected in the media the way the leadership fancies and in many cases no other version of the official story is available.

There is no doubt that Dowek's statement includes some exaggeration. It may describe the performance of official media organs, both television channels and newspapers, whose freedom of expression is certainly circumscribed by governmental control. But independent newspapers, to be fair, have enjoyed, after Mubarak's ascendance, a wide margin of freedom; condemnation of policies and criticism of senior officials including ministers started to be sanctioned. Yet, red lines were not completely absent; direct criticism of the President and his family was totally prohibited, so was harming Egypt's relations with friendly Arab states, in particular Saudi Arabia. Moreover, harassment of radical newspapers/journalists was not unusual. Withholding newspaper licenses or closing them down remained a common practice. Some cases of kidnapping and beating up critics occurred, and no serious investigative effort on the part of security authorities followed, raising the suspicion of governmental involvement.

In the last couple of years, a further improvement in the status of the press took place, against the backdrop of internal and external calls for democratization and reform. The change was explained by Hisham Kassem, a prominent Egyptian publisher: "From 1993 to 2003, Mubarak was criticized once…He closed down the newspaper, as well as the political party that published it."[81] Things changed dramatically, however, with the campaign to promote democratic values in the Middle East. As Kassem points out, "Egyptians have discovered dissent…And its no longer possible for the regime to manage information in the old ways."[82]

Methodology & Materials:

Since the study explores Egypt's foreign policy under President Hosni Mubarak, a close look is taken at the decision-making process and those involved in it, chief among them is the President himself. Mubarak's personality, beliefs and conceptions of international

relations and the best way to handle foreign policy issues are thoroughly looked at. In addition, the role of other institutions (and influential figures) is examined. The roles played by the state's different agencies (the Foreign Ministry, the Intelligence, the Military Establishment) and the President's key advisors are highlighted. Also, comparisons between Mubarak and his predecessors - Gamal Abdul Nasser and Anwar Sadat - are carried out.

Qualitative methods of analysis are basically relied upon. Yet, statistics and revealing figures are also used throughout the study. Tables are presented to further illustrate the issues at hand. For example, tables exhibiting Egypt's volume of trade with Iran and the scope of its economic and military relations with the United States are used.

Primary sources constituted a major pillar of the body of literature used for the study. Memoirs of state officials and diplomats whose credibility had not been questioned were used. Public speeches, announcements and press conferences (whether given by presidents, prime ministers or foreign ministers) were also given special attention, especially those that reveal, directly or indirectly, aspects of the decision-making process. They were examined with the utmost scrutiny as they often reflect the truth filtered through the personal judgment of their authors. Yet, primary sources remain important for an insight into the "black box" (i.e. the foreign policy decision-making process) and are thus indispensable for the understanding of the foreign policy of Egypt. Similarly, secondary sources were widely harnessed for this research. Books and articles published in academic journals (in both English and Arabic) written by authors representing different trends of opinions were utilized to enhance our understanding of the behaviors and processes of Egypt foreign policy. Since both case studies deal with recent events, articles from the Egyptian and international press were also used. To fill the gaps of the existing literature, field research was carried out in Cairo. Interviews were conducted with experts on Egyptian politics in general, and its foreign policy in particular, such as scholars, current and former officials (especially diplomats), and journalists. To the benefit of this inquiry, many of them revealed, during private conversations, more information than they do in public. And much of this information was, indeed, valuable.

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[1]Mohamed Ayoob, *The Third World Security Predicament: State Making, Regional Conflict and the International System* (Boulder & London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1995), 9.

[2]Laura Neack, Jeanne Hey, and Patrick Haney, *Foreign Policy Analysis: Continuity and Change in Its Second Generation* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1995), 2.

[3]Ibid., 3.

[4]Ibid., 4.

[5]Ibid., 9.

[6]Ibid., 1.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Ibid., 2.

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CHAPTER II
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:
EGYPT'S FOREIGN POLICY IN FIFTY YEARS

This chapter offers an overview of the major events in Egypt's foreign policy in the period from 1952-1991. Major foreign policy decisions taken by Presidents Nasser, Sadat and Mubarak are highlighted and the driving force behind them is explained. The objectives and style of the three presidents' foreign policy is analyzed. Furthermore, the foreign policy decision-making process in the three eras is discussed. The concluding part summarizes the major findings of the chapter.

Egypt's Foreign Policy Pre-Revolution

Most analysts agree that an independent, concrete and fully-fledged Egyptian foreign policy did not emerge before the Free Officers' revolution of July 1952[1]. Egypt under the monarchy - militarily occupied and politically preoccupied with the internal power struggle among the ruling parties (the King, the British and political parties) - did not have a well-defined or active foreign policy. The totality of foreign policy - normally a complex and multifaceted process - was limited to two issues: the desired withdrawal of British occupation from Egyptian territory and the unity of Egypt and the Sudan. In a letter to his British counterpart, the Egyptian Foreign Minister in 1950 asserted that:

> *"Our foreign policy is a very limited one, and can almost be resolved in these two questions now under discussion, the question of evacuation and that of the unity of Egypt and the Sudan under the Egyptian crown"*[2].

Obviously, both issues required dealing with the British but since progress on both tracks - due to the huge asymmetry of power - was slow, even absent, the Anglo-Egyptian relationship often turned conflictual. In fact, that conflict "was so central to political life in Cairo that it informed all aspects of Egyptian foreign policy in the postwar era"[3].

Cairo's regional policies were thus driven in part by its deep animosity towards British schemes but were constrained at the same time by its status as an occupied state. Naturally, "Egypt was in no position to determine its own foreign relations as long as the British army occupied Egypt and the so-called advice of HMG, granted through the British high

commissioners (later ambassadors) in Cairo, was binding"[4]. Nevertheless, at critical moments - albeit few -, Egypt embarked on serious external ventures aimed at boosting its posture vis-à-vis regional leadership contenders. In the period between 1943 and 1945, for example, Egypt led the diplomatic efforts aimed at founding a regional political organization that would assert its supremacy in the Arab World. Those efforts culminated in the establishment of the Arab League in March 1945 with Cairo chosen as its permanent headquarters and an Egyptian (Abdul-Rahman Azzam) serving as its first Secretary-General. Egypt's prime objective in founding the league lied in hampering Britain's plans for a new Middle Eastern order favoring Cairo's Hashemite rivals.

The decision to participate in the 1948 Arab-Israeli confrontation is another case in point. Driven by fierce competition with other Arab monarchs (Abdullah of Jordan, Faisal of Iraq and Abdul-Aziz al-Saud of Saudi Arabia) and pressured by a heated public opinion that was disturbed by the establishment of the state of Israel and the loss of Palestine, the Egyptian King - after an initial period of hesitation - took a last-minute decision to engage (along with other Arab armies) with the nascent Jewish state[5].

Again in 1950, and to frustrate a potential Iraqi-Syrian union that would have weakened Egypt's influence in the region, Cairo proposed the creation of an Arab security arrangement: The Arab League Collective Security Pact (ALCSP). The pact also sought undermining the British military presence as it implied the replacement of the order underpinned by the network of British military bases with a new indigenous Arab order[6].

In brief, Egypt's external relations before the 1952 revolution were predominantly hostage to its problematic relationship with Britain. Yet, Egypt's centrality in the region propelled it at times to take major political initiatives to protect its supreme position from challenges posed by regional powers. These efforts, however, were seriously constrained by its dependence on London. An independent foreign policy had to wait for the year 1952 when a group of army officers - led by Colonel Gamal abdel Nasser - indignant at their country's occupation and the corrupt political system waged their coup d'etat that overthrew the monarchy and established Egypt a republic.

Nasser's Revolutionary Foreign Policy

1952-1956

Though the 1952 takeover was not a regular Latin American-type coup nor was Nasser a regular military officer, the foreign policy of the new regime did not reveal itself before the years 1954-55. The first two years of the revolution were marked by intense competition among the free officers themselves as well as with other political forces. In 1952, the constitution was abrogated and political parties were banned and in early 1954, General Mohamed Naguib - the façade leader Nasser used to give the new regime a popular face - was sidelined. The power of the leaders of the '*ancien regime*' was further weakened by the agrarian reforms implemented as early as September 1952. After consolidating his power at home, Nasser paid attention to the challenges of foreign policy.

Nasser's personality and ideas imprinted Egypt's foreign policy from the very start. In fact, if the psychological school needs a proof of the impact of idiosyncrasies on policy outcomes, then Nasser would be its best example in the Middle East. He envisaged, for example, a leading role for Egypt in the Arab world. An often cited paragraph in his manifesto, *The Philosophy of the Revolution*, went as follows:

"History is…charged with great heroic roles which do not find actors to play them on the stage. I do not know why I always imagine that in this region in which we live, there is a role wandering aimlessly about seeking an actor to play it. I do not know why this role…should at last settle down, weary and worn out, on our frontiers beckoning us to move, to dress up for it and to perform it since there is nobody else who could do so…We and only we are impelled by our environment and are capable of performing this role"[7].

In the same book, Nasser identified three circles of foreign policy activity: the Arab, African and Islamic. To Nasser, the Arab circle was the most important sphere of influence for Egypt[8]. Rafah, wrote Nasser, "is not the end of our borders"[9].

After signing the Anglo-Egyptian treaty in 1954 that laid down a speedy timetable for the evacuation of British forces from the Suez Canal area, Nasser became released of a major source of pressure and was free to pursue a dynamic independence-oriented foreign policy. Egypt's interaction with, and creation of, the dramatic events of the year 1955 represented the pillars of the new Egyptian foreign policy that was to last for more than a decade: The political battle with the Baghdad Pact, the Bandung Conference and the Czech arms deal were the first real signs of 'change' in Egypt's post-revolution foreign policy, the policy that is often dubbed as 'revolutionary'.

The Western schemes designed to bolster their leverage in the strategic Middle East and retain a foothold in that critical arena of Cold War competition culminated in the signing of the Turkish-Iraqi Treaty - later to be known as the Baghdad Pact - in February 1955. But Nasser was against all Western defense pacts. To him, they represented nothing but a new form of imperialism. Colonialism that was forced to exit from the door wants to return through the window, Nasser argued. In his meeting with US Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, Nasser expressed his fears that military alliances with Western powers would compromise his country's sovereignty and encroach upon its newly-gained independence: "small nations included in the circles of pacts cannot stand on an equal footing with big powers. They cannot discuss matters on an equal basis"[10].

Not only did the Baghdad Pact provide an alternative arrangement for the defense of the region to the Egyptian vision that stressed the need for regional cooperation (under Egyptian command) as well as staying out of great power blocs, but it also threatened to isolate Egypt if other Arab states like Jordan, Syria and Lebanon were pressured to join. Faced with no choice but disrupting the plan, Nasser waged a ferocious political and propaganda campaign against Iraq's premiere, Nuri Al-Said, using his formidable propaganda apparatus, an instrument he frequently resorted to later on to achieve his foreign policy objectives. The episode exhibited both Egypt's centrality in inter-Arab relations and Nasser's brilliant leadership skills, both of which led eventually to the hindrance of the Baghdad Pact and the isolation of its protagonist: Iraq's Nuri.

In April 1955, Nasser attended the Afro-Asian conference in Bandung, another significant landmark in Egypt's quest for a leading regional role. The gathering was a chance for Nasser to project Egypt's influence outside the conventional borders of the Arab World and into the wider arena of the then expanding developing world. The convention was the nucleus of a wide assembly of Third World states who were gravely concerned about protecting their embryonic independence from great powers' games and avoiding getting caught in the Cold War confrontation. Out of Bandung did Nasser - along with Tito of Yugoslavia and Nehru of India - articulate the notion of "positive neutrality" adopted by the non-aligned movement, a grouping that constituted a substantial political force in world politics till the end of the Cold War.

The significance of the Baghdad Pact standoff and the Bandung conference notwithstanding, the conclusion of the Soviet-inspired Czech Arms deal in September of the same year probably symbolized most the tenets of Nasser's emerging foreign policy. The catalyst came in February with the Israeli raid on Gaza that killed scores of Egyptian soldiers. Nasser felt threatened, and humiliated in front of his people and army, the natural constituency of a charismatic leader. According to Gerges, Nasser and the Free Officers had before the raid "given the economic and civilian sectors a higher priority than the military. They had emphasized activities aimed at social reform rather than military spending. But the Gaza raid changed all that"[11]. Nasser sought arms and his first choice was Washington, but Eisenhower's administration had other plans. It dragged its feet for months and even tried to use the carrot of military aid to entice Egypt to sign a peace treaty with Israel. For Nasser, this meant political suicide; it would bring about marginalization and loss of regional ambitions. As Nasser put it in an interview with the *New York Times*, "it was a matter of life and death, and we had no choice"[12]. Impatient with Washington's procrastination, Nasser thought the unthinkable, namely breaking the Western monopoly over arms transfers by inviting the Russians into the region. When the news of the deal leaked, the Eisenhower administration tried to abort it by applying direct pressure on Egypt. Nasser was warned that "severe" measures will be taken against Egypt if the deal was finalized. Nasser was not dissuaded and he went on with the agreement.

The Czech arms deal and the Bandung conference marked the beginnings of Nasser's international political alliances. The former event brought the Soviets into a close political and military alliance with Egypt which lasted for the totality of Nasser's political tenure. And the second event sowed the seeds of the non-aligned movement which Egypt helped create and vigorously supported. In all subsequent confrontations with Israel and the West, Nasser relied on the political, military, economic and moral backing of these two parties. Certainly, their presence on the international stage helped Nasser pursue his foreign policy objectives, notably independence and development. In other words, the availability of reliable allies increases prospects of balancing.

The new foreign policy was injected with an inspiring ideology: pan-Arabism. The ideology that was deeply-rooted in a country like Syria was somehow new to Egypt. As Nasser frankly admitted to the Syrian and Iraqi delegations during the 1963 tripartite unity

talks, “the nationalist feeling in Syria has been clear for a long time. In Syria when an infant is born, he utters the words, Arab nationalism and Arab unity…Here in Egypt, this feeling emerged only in 1955 or 1956”. The use of Arabism started with the Baghdad Pact battle. In the words of Dawisha:

“It was soon realized that the most effective method was to appeal directly to the fermenting nationalist and anti-West sentiment by using Nasser’s personality and his rhetorical ability…..the principle of Arabism was espoused by the decision-making elite primarily as a response to political and strategic factors”[13].

The change in Egypt’s external relations was paralleled internally by a similar transformation of Egyptian politics and society. Politically, the liberal experiment of the period from 1922 to 1952 was shunned and power became centralized in the hands of the revolutionary council (later on the central government controlled by Nasser himself). Measures to realize social justice (e.g. agrarian reforms) were implemented and rushed efforts towards industrialization and self-sufficiency were embarked on. In that new setting, a public sector geared towards economic growth was to become the backbone of the economy.

Undoubtedly, the new regime developed an alliance with different parties than those the *'ancien regime'* had relied on for decades, namely the aristocracy and agents of foreign interests. The new alliance included, primarily, the army, the bureaucracy and the party. The significant role of the army in the post-revolution Egyptian state is undeniable. The army is the guardian of the regime from both internal and external threats. Furthermore, the 'Free Officers' movement that undertook the 1952 revolution served as the foremost recruitment pool to the core elite of Nasser's regime. Most vice-presidents, ministers, party executives and governors came from the military. The huge bureaucracy Nasser instituted - along with the socioeconomic developments unleashed by the revolution - led to the emergence and empowerment of the middle class. It was this class that provided the bulk of Nasser's legitimacy at home. They benefitted from the 'accomplishments' of the revolution, in education, employment and health care. They were also devoid of the type of anti-socialist ideological leanings that characterized the attitude of the defunct aristocracy. Nasser was their 'Godfather', and they lent him - and his ideology and policies - the utmost support. The single-party was, typical of authoritarian states, used as a means of legitimating policies and mobilizing people towards goals set forward by the regime.

This populist and military base of Nasser's regime reinforced his nationalist tendencies. The 'Free Officers' who joined Nasser in ousting the British occupation were against foreign influences as much as he was. Submitting to the dictates of another colonial power (e.g. the United States) would have brought their support of the regime to a halt. They would have opposed Nasser the way they opposed Sadat when he flirted with the US and Israel before their removal from positions of authority in May 1971. It was also the heyday of communism worldwide, and many in the military establishment and the Arab Socialist Union were either outright communists (e.g. Ali Sabry) or leftists, in varying degrees and levels of commitment. Many others were nationalists without strong ideological affiliations, but with high dreams of an independent and modern Egypt. To both groups, the United States and Israel were the spearheads of international imperialism, a plague that should be struggled with. In addition, the prevailing mood in the 1950s and 1960s was that of revolution and progress, objectives that Nasser skillfully embodied.

The bureaucracy, particularly top executives, favored social policies and a dominant role for the state in society. Repudiating that role would have, inevitably, put an end to the privileges they enjoyed in the public sector. It should be noted, also, that many in the ruling coalition believed that a change in Nasser's policies would, ultimately, jeopardize their entrenched benefits. The safest route to protect their interests was a continuation of the policies of the status quo.

In the mid-1950s, a single project -The Aswan High Dam - came to symbolize Egypt’s aspirations for national development and economic power. The project was to provide, for the first time, electricity to the Egyptian countryside and increase agricultural space by one-fifth. Moreover, the dam would protect the land of Egypt from the dangers of floods and drought, a constant feature of life in Egypt for millennia. The Egyptian state considered the venture a national goal and gave it its full backing.

Egypt sought Western funding for its ambitious project and negotiations with the United States and the World Bank continued for months, but failed eventually on the rock of American attempts to impose political compliance using economic sanctions. According to Gerges, Eisenhower and Dulles “subscribed to a realist model of world politics where great powers still reigned supreme. To them, small states were pieces on the chessboard of the international system or, at most, just pawns in the East-West struggle. By refusing to accept

U.S. demands, the arrogant Nasser was out of line and needed to be put in his place"[14]. Accordingly, the US withdrew its offer to provide financial assistance to Egypt to build the High Dam.

The accompanying discourse of the American administration especially the withdrawal statement's emphasis on its interest "in the welfare of the Egyptian people" worried Nasser, who cared first and foremost about his authority at home. He perceived it as an invitation to his people to get rid of his regime and choose a new leader that would be able to deal with the American side[15]. He told Mahmoud Fawzi and Mohamed Heikal: "This is not a withdrawal, it is an attack on the regime and an invitation to the people of Egypt to bring it down"[16]. Nasser's reaction, therefore, was quick, intense and totally unanticipated. As usual, Nasser cared about his legitimacy at home more than anything else. The Western offense had to be answered. A few days after Dulles announced the withdrawal of the American offer, Nasser decided to nationalize the Suez Canal Company, another symbol of foreign economic domination.

The extraordinary decision sent shock waves throughout Egypt and the region; it cemented Nasser's leadership at home and his popularity reached new heights in the Arab world. Nasser was from now on regarded as the undisputed hero of the Arab world, the new "Saladin" who would restore Arab dignity and return their rights in Palestine and elsewhere. The Western response, however, was hostile. The United Kingdom in particular saw the move as unacceptable and was adamant to challenge Nasser's control of the canal. British Prime Minister Anthony Eden saw it as a golden opportunity to get rid once and for all of Nasser's threat to British interests in the Near East. Just five days after the decision, he sent a letter to President Eisenhower saying: "My colleagues and I are convinced that we must be ready in the last resort to use force to bring Nasser to his senses. For our part, we are prepared to do so. I have this morning instructed our Chief of Staff to prepare a military plan accordingly"[17]. The Americans were not convinced; they preferred using political and diplomatic means to solve the crisis.

With no prior consultation with the United States and in collusion with Israel, Britain and France launched a military attack against Egypt in late October. As usual, Nasser did not give in. He sought the help of Soviets, mobilized the Arab nation against the invaders and appealed to the world public opinion.

The miscalculated invasion was met with global condemnation. The Arab World boiled in anger and the United States recognized that it was wise to distance itself from the invaders lest it jeopardizes its vast interests in the Arab world. Eisenhower explained to his Secretary of State his stance by saying: "How could we possibly support Britain and France if in doing so we lose the whole Arab world?"[18]. The Soviet Union, likewise, could not miss a chance to bolster its presence in the Middle East and extend its power in the whole Third World. On the 5th of November, the Kremlin issued an unprecedented communiqué warning his former allies - Britain and France - that their capital cities were not out of the range of Soviet nuclear missiles[19]. The venture hence ended in a fiasco; the British were forced to withdraw - this time for good - from Egypt and accept the termination of their dominance in the region. On the other hand, Egypt maintained its sovereignty, kept the canal and achieved an exceptional political victory.

But the consequences of the 1956 war were not all positive for Egypt. Some were dormant and only showed their negative side ten years later. First, Nasser's victory boosted his self-confidence. Consequently, he became blindly convinced that his adventurous risk-taking foreign policy yielded positive results, a conviction he paid dearly for in the crisis of May-June 1967. Second, the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Sinai was not possible without an Egyptian acquiescence for Israeli ships to pass in the Tiran Straits, a weapon that other Arab regimes effectively used against Nasser in the mid-60s Arab 'Cold War', a political and propaganda battle whose escalation contributed to the eruption of the 1967 war. Third, Nasser's relationship with his lifetime comrade and Defense Minister - Abd el-Hakim Amer - was seriously disturbed by the Suez crisis. Nasser was outraged by the poor military performance and blamed Amer for it. Yet, personal relations took over professional calculations and the incompetent Amer was left in this vital post for ten more years. It was not before Egypt lost the whole of Sinai and its control over the Suez Canal in the aftermath of the 1967 war that Amer was ousted to give way for a professional management of the army.

The turbulent events of the years 1955 and 1956 illustrated a number of points with regards to Nasser's foreign policy. First, they highlighted Nasser's determination to pursue an independent course of development at all costs, including sustaining a strained relationship with the US and inviting communist influence to the region. Independence was a key feature of Nasser's political blueprint.

Second, all four events - Baghdad Pact, Bandung, the arms deal and nationalizing the Suez Canal Company - highlighted Nasser's genuine desire in assuming the mantle of leadership in the Arab world. Along with strategic and political considerations, the pursuit of leadership was partially driven by economic considerations[20]. Nasser knew that Egypt "the regional leader" would be in a better position to extract resources from superpowers than Egypt "the ordinary state".

Third, the previous two elements (independence and leadership) stemmed from Nasser's political beliefs, in particular his perceptions of how Egypt's foreign policy should be run. Also, it could be argued that both objectives were the cause and consequence of Nasser's charismatic leadership. A charismatic leader, Nasser could not afford to be perceived as a puppet of Western powers and had to constantly prove his credentials to maintain security and order at home. At the same time, showing the ability to lead the Arab world and maintain national independence despite the plots of superpowers lent him additional popularity and support in Egypt and beyond, which further solidified his stature as a 'charismatic' national leader.

Fourth, they revealed a key feature of Nasser's personality: his reluctance to submit to threats and readiness to take risks - albeit calculated - and defy great powers when the stakes are high. This trait had a direct impact on the conduct of his foreign policy. As Dawisha pointed out:

"Nasser's courage, coupled with an almost uncanny confidence in his own tactical skill, made him take decisions and formulate policies that were both unorthodox and unexpected. Many of these decisions were rapid responses to international stimuli…..Many of these responses were naturally risky, yet cannot be considered as reckless"[21].

1957-1967

The Suez crisis was a turning point in the modern history of the Middle East and a milestone in the development of Egypt's post-revolution foreign policy. By the time the last Israeli soldier left the Sinai in March 1957, Egypt - turning a military defeat into a political victory - fully established its hegemony in inter-Arab politics and its centrality in the Third World at large. Nasser's popularity skyrocketed and his political ideology - Arab Nationalism - gained new grounds.

Thus, it was the thrust the pan-Arab movement received from Egypt's rising power in the Arab world after the Suez crisis that helped pave the way for the merger of Egypt and Syria in February 1958 in what became to be known as the United Arab Republic (UAR). In particular, Syria's Arab nationalists - represented by the Arab Socialist Ba'th party (ASBP) - found in Nasser a formidable ally that could be relied upon to outbid their local political rivals. "An alliance with Nasser was their ticket to power and stardom"[22], wrote Gerges.

Relations between both countries had actually been fostered since the year 1955 by the conclusion of a number a military and economic treaties. A mutual defense pact was signed in 1955 followed in 1956 with an agreement for industrial cooperation. In 1957, an agreement aimed at the unification of the economies of both states was concluded too. The Syrian stand of solidarity with Egypt during the 1956 tripartite aggression was reciprocated with the support Egypt gave in the following year to Syria against Turkish border provocations[23]. Syria, a hotbed of Arab national sentiments, was at the time ripe for union. Unrest prevailed in 1957 with, on one hand, growing communist influence at home and, on the other, an American outcry about the prospects of Syria turning into a Soviet satellite. In January 1958, a group of nationalist and Ba'thi Syrian officers rushed to Cairo and demanded an immediate union with Egypt. Nasser - who had previously announced more than once that a constitutional unity should take at least five years of steady preparation[24] - first rejected, then accepted, the offer. Yet, by accepting the risky venture under the pressure of circumstances, he took what turned out to be the first of a series of miscalculations.

Why Nasser changed his mind on the eleventh hour is a controversial question. Strategic considerations may have influenced his thinking. Nasser always acknowledged the importance of Syria for Egypt's foreign policy in the Arab world; no hostile regime shall take over Damascus and threaten Egyptian interests in the Levant. He was therefore weary of the red tide in Syrian politics and the mounting possibility thus of two unfavorable scenarios: a radical communist coup or an American intervention to abort it. Moreover, he recognized the leverage the new state would give on the regional and international arenas, as well as the influence and prestige he would personally enjoy in the Arab world. Also, by extending his control to Syria, Nasser would be in a position to exercise control over Middle Eastern oil transported to Europe. The power of the new state and the repercussions its instatement

created was evident in the anxious comment made by the Turkish Prime Minister Adnan Mandreis in a letter sent on the eve of the union to the US Secretary of State:

"I slept last night with a state of six million people to the South of my country. I woke up today to find a state of thirty six million on my Southern borders"[25].

In addition, the public opinion in Syria was enthusiastic for an association with Egypt and pushed hard for it. To a charismatic leader, the mood of the public opinion certainly carries significant weight. It could be argued that the rise in Nasser's popularity in the Arab world following his political victory in 1956 was a double-edged sword. It boosted his legitimacy, but tied him too much to the wishes of the Arab masses. Nasser became a hostage of his own successes.

Nasser's decision to decline the Syrian offer then accept it showed how much foreign policy decisions in Egypt are centralized and personalized. As Hinnebusch explains:

"the president is supreme commander, declares war, concludes treaties, proposes and vetoes legislation, and may rule through decree under emergency powers….The extent of the president's consultation with the top elite and with foreign policy professionals in the policy process is, therefore, very much a matter of his personal taste, while the relative influence of such elites depends more on their personal relations with the president than their official position"[26].

In brief, politics under Nasser "was one-man rule"[27] and the realm of foreign policy was no exception. Centralization of foreign policy continued to be the norm under Presidents Sadat and Mubarak.

The decision to merge with Syria, furthermore, exhibited the impact a risk-taking leadership has on the formulation and execution of foreign policy. Taking a gamble on the uncertain union experiment - just like the Czech arms deal and the nationalization of the Suez Canal Company - was a decision that could not have been taken without Nasser's adventuresome foreign policy style.

Established in a hasty and unplanned manner, the amalgamation lasted for only three years and a half. In September 1961, a secessionist attempt took place in the UAR's Northern province: Syria. In response, Nasser adopted the military option; parachute brigades were dispatched to Latakiyya and all operating naval forces were ordered to combat the secession forces. The operation nonetheless was cancelled a few hours later. The decision was partially

caused by psychological factors. Nasser was deeply touched by the extraordinary way Syrian people received him on his first Syrian tour in 1958. Hence, it was increasingly difficult for him to order an operation that would shed Syrian blood. As a result, Nasser - the father of Arab nationalists - retreated at the last moment and canceled the rescue operation altogether, a clear sign of the eagerness of charismatic leaders to maintain their positive image in the eyes of their constituencies.

The UAR's fiasco notwithstanding, Nasser's objectives and foreign policy style did not undergo any drastic change. Pursuing leadership in the Arab world and the readiness to take risks, even those of military nature, were apparent in his decision to intervene militarily in Yemen in the aftermath of its revolution. In 1962, Imam Ahmed of Yemen passed away and his son, Mohamed el-Badr, was ousted by a revolutionary coup that abolished the Imamate and established the Yemen Arab Republic. A civil war ensued between the revolutionaries and tribes loyal to the royal family. According to Gerges:

"The Egyptian leader's uncompromising stand was directly related to his perception of the regional and global configuration of forces. The breakup of the UAR struck at the very basis of Nasser's political legitimacy—his claim to the *leadership* of the Arab nationalist movement. It also threatened to reverse Cairo's hard-won achievements on the international stage and the internal stability of his regime"[28]

In other words, two considerations loomed large in Nasser's mind: sustaining Egypt's leadership in the area to absorb the negative effects of the UAR debacle and maintaining the regime's internal stability.

The civil war in Yemen turned into a regional war with Saudi Arabia supporting the royal forces and Egypt backing the revolution. It proved to be "Nasser's Vietnam" as he personally acknowledged later on. Several peace initiatives failed and Egypt's involvement was only interrupted when its military forces were needed on another more vital front.

1967-1970: The Six Day War and After

In the mid-1960s, the Arab world was virtually divided into two contrasting camps: the 'progressive' or revolutionary camp encompassing countries like Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Yemen and the reactionary camp comprised of the monarchies of Jordan and Saudi Arabia as

well as the 'moderate' regimes of Lebanon and Tunisia. The Arab 'Cold War' between both camps shaped inter-Arab relations in the 1960s and up to the 1967 war.

In May 1967, reports spread of Israeli military concentrations on the Syrian border in response to Syria's support for Palestinian fedayeen; an attack against Damascus seemed imminent. Nasser was meanwhile exposed to a vicious propaganda campaign emanating from reactionaries' radio stations accusing him of "hiding behind the blue skirts of the UN," (The UNEF had been positioned in the Sinai as part of the conclusion of the Suez war) and of fighting the brethren in Yemen instead of the enemies in Israel. Again, Nasser's legitimacy was threatened and his primacy in the Arab world challenged. To regain his legitimacy at home and reestablish his hegemony in the region, the daring Nasser took a number of dramatic steps: he asked the UN peace keeping troops to leave, ordered the blockade of the Gulf of Aqaba to Israeli shipping and remilitarized Sinai (which had been de-militarized at the end of the Suez war). Israel claimed the closure of Aqaba meant suffocation and could not be tolerated. On the 5th of June, Israel launched a massive military strike against Egypt, Syria and Jordan and defeated them in less than six days. The Arab loss was huge: the Sinai of Egypt, the Golan Heights of Syria and the West Bank of Jordan, including East Jerusalem.

Throughout his political career, fighting Israel was never a high priority on Nasser's agenda[29]. He was aware of the acute disparity in military power and Egypt's inevitable vulnerability in any would-be military confrontation with Israel. He "hoped to succeed where Muhammad Ali had failed, namely, to bring the Arabs under Egyptian control *without firing a single shot* and without outside interference"[30] (emphasis mine). He thus exerted effort to contain and isolate the impulsive Syrian regime whose dangerous policies could drag him into an unwanted war with Israel. Heikal, for example, wrote that Nasser told King Hassan of Morocco in 1965 that his priority lies in settling the conflict in Yemen and not in embattling Israel. He added that some Arab leaders (referring basically to Syrian Ba'thists) can not differentiate between "dreams" and "actions". King Hassan concurred and expressed to Nasser his fears that the attitude of the Syrians would play into the hands of Israel's hawks[31]. Nasser was obviously attentive to the dangers involved in an unprepared for conflict with Israel. Hence, the measures he took in May 1967 that escalated the crisis did not intend to go into battle with Israel, but rather to maintain his legitimacy in Egypt and the Arab world by appearing tough vis-à-vis Israel.

Yet, as prominent Florentine philosopher Niccolo Machiavelli confirmed, "ambitious men do not know when to stop"[32] Nasser's risk-taking policy backfired this time and his grave miscalculations cost him what he had been struggling for since his ascendance to power fifteen year earlier, namely Egypt's independence. As Nahas rightly argued, "(a) whole era had come to an end"[33]. Indeed, the war "effectively ended the era of Egyptian dominance in the Arab world"[34] and seriously affected the legitimacy of the post-revolution regime at home. Still, one could argue that Nasser's approach of balancing outside threats and appeasing internal ones guaranteed him a remarkable degree of security at home. It is interesting to note that Nasser's resignation submitted after the humiliating defeat was - in a rare display of support - immediately turned down by his people. The demonstrations of the 9th and 10th of June testified to the success of his strategy.

With Egyptian territory occupied, Cairo had no alternative but the military option, so an attrition war was waged. Therefore, Cairo's dependence on Moscow reached new heights. In dire need of military assistance, Nasser had to accept the presence of thousands of Soviet military advisors on Egyptian soil. Furthermore, Nasser figured out that the Sinai would not be restored to Egyptian control without the involvement of superpowers. Hence, he tried to engage the Soviets more deeply into the conflict. In the meantime, he tried to force the U.S. to pay attention to Egyptian concerns by increasing the Soviet military presence. It was the Cold War time, and Nasser was, undeniably, a master of dealing with its bi-polar structure.

The Khartoum Arab summit held in August 1967 symbolized the decline in Egypt's power resulting from its disastrous defeat. The two major issues that dominated the conference, namely ending the armed conflict in Yemen and the financial support to be paid by oil-rich states to front-line states, depended on the support of other Arab poles (in particular Gulf states, especially Saudi Arabia), hitherto on the margins of regional politics. Egypt had to come to terms with its dependence on Moscow and Arab oil states.

On the 28th of September, 1970, Nasser passed away. He was succeeded by his Vice President, Anwar Sadat, a 'free officer' who had been part of the political elite during Nasser's era, yet mostly in the shadow. Under Sadat, Egypt's foreign policy underwent a major transformation.

Sadat's Foreign Policy, 1970-1981 (Changing Course)

1970-1973: Continuation of the Nasserite Legacy

The then shadowy Sadat[35] could not at first depart from the policies he had inherited from his predecessor. The Nasserite line in foreign policy thus continued to guide Sadat's international behavior till October 1973[36]. Sadat, however, was not as compliant as his local opponents envisaged. On May 15th, 1971, he launched a preemptive strike against the Nasserist old guards who continued to interfere in his foreign policy and had, in effect, the power of disrupting his plans. Having his opponents in jail (1971) and doing well against Israel (1973), Sadat established his legitimacy and had a free hand in running Egypt's foreign relations. In a few years, Sadat changed Egypt's official name (from the United Arab Republic to the Arab Republic of Egypt) as well as its national anthem and flag[37]. Those trivial changes preceded a more profound structural change in the second half of the seventies.

The main objectives of Egypt's foreign policy under Sadat were the following: 1) Restoring the Egyptian occupied territories; 2) Ending the state of war with Israel as the economic burden resulting of it became unbearable; 3) Improving Egypt's relations with Washington; and 4) Modernizing Egypt's economy by attracting foreign investment and Western technology[38].

Knowing the dangers inherent in a military confrontation with Israel, Sadat pursued a diplomatic solution to the occupied Sinai territory problem. A number of diplomatic initiatives were taken in the years 1971 and 1972 but failed on the rock of Israeli intransigence and American indifference. Sadat realized that the standoff could not be broken without military action. On the 6th of October, 1973, Egypt and Syria launched a well-coordinated surprise offense against Israel. The two-week war heralded a substantial change in the foreign policy of Egypt.

1974-1977: Foreign Policy Restructuring

The 1973 war was a turning point in Egypt's history. The legitimacy the exceptional military performance bestowed on Sadat enabled him to dramatically shift his country's foreign policy. The transformation was, indeed, substantial and quick. In a span of three years, Egypt substituted the Soviet Union with the United States as its superpower patron, sought peace with Israel and changed its domestic socio-economic orientation from state socialism to capitalism. In addition, the single-party system was replaced with a controlled form of

political pluralism. As Dessouki put it, it was “more than a change in tactics or instruments of policy implementation”[39]. It is fair, therefore, to contend that Sadat totally restructured Egypt’s foreign policy.

A few weeks after the end of hostilities, Sadat met with the US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and the following months and years witnessed a rapid rapprochement with Americans and a sudden break-up with the twenty-year Soviet alliance. The question of occupied territories was urgent and the Egyptian leadership realized that “the answer clearly lay in Washington and not in Moscow, as the Americans had the money, the technology, and the leverage over Israel required to satisfy Egyptian needs”[40]. In 1975, the Egyptian-Soviet Friendship and Cooperation Treaty (signed in May 1971) was abrogated and relations with Moscow kept deteriorating to reach their lowest ebb in the year 1981 with the expulsion of the Soviet ambassador amid harsh accusations (made by Sadat himself and other top officials) of interference in domestic Egyptian affairs.

Sadat deeply believed that '99% of the cards of the Middle Eastern political game lie in the hands of Americans'. Only America, he told Heikal, could force Israel to withdraw from the Sinai. Egypt’s enrollment in the American camp, moreover, was seen as a ticket to generous American aid and technology. The statement reflects how powerful Sadat thought the Americans to be. If the US is appeased, he reasoned, it would help Egypt regain its land and revive its economy. If Egypt continues its hostility to the US the way Nasser did, it would be exposed to immense pressure with serious ramifications for its regional standing and internal stability. Sadat opted for the former. Hence, the greater the level of external threat (real or perceived), the greater is the tendency to align with it.

Sadat inferred that, in return to American services, the Egyptian state could serve American interests in the region by curtailing the tide of communism and opening the gates for American hegemony. In fact, as an Arab state, Egypt could be even more beneficial than America’s long-standing ally: Israel.

On the personal level, Sadat deeply despised the Soviets. He once described them as "crude and tasteless people"[41]. In fact, feelings of "humiliation, frustration, and violated dignity"[42] could be frequently detected in his words on the Soviet Union. By the end of his political tenure, Sadat clearly perceived it as an 'enemy'. These feelings certainly affected his decision to ally with the West against the socialist camp. Also, Sadat was an inside-out

pragmatist, who did not care about grand ideologies and theories. He easily relieved himself of the constraints Arab nationalism and non-alignment had imposed on the actions of Nasser and pursued a realist and interest-driven foreign policy. As explained in chapter one, the idiosyncrasies of leaders of Third World states impact the shape and content of foreign policy.

The road towards a political settlement with Israel started with the signing of two disengagement agreements in 1974 and 1975, the second of which was pursued at the price of discord with Cairo's war partner: Syria. Sadat was keen on ending the no war/no peace status and it seemed that nothing could stop him.

In January 1977, the stability of the regime was seriously shaken by the food riots that erupted in major Egyptian cities in protest of the sudden rise in the prices of basic food stuff. The magnitude of the unforeseen riots - the first in years - took Sadat by surprise. The raise in prices was quickly reversed and the IMF economic restructuring plan was indefinitely postponed in spite of Western disappointment. The level of internal threat was too high to be balanced. Indeed, when in conflict with other objectives, the regime's survival always held the upper hand in the calculations of Egypt's ruler, be he a Nasser or a Sadat.

In November 1977, Sadat, impatient of the peace process stalemate and Israel's procrastination, decided to end the deadlock by visiting Jerusalem and holding official talks with Israeli officials for the first time in the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict[43]. Not consulted or coordinated with, and profoundly constrained by their constituencies, Arab countries were not ready to join, but Sadat did not care much. Egypt's go-it-alone approach resulted in the signing of the Camp David Accords in 1978 and the Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty in March 1979. As a result of Egypt's defection, it was kicked out of the Arab League and the Organization of the Islamic Conference and, needless to say, forfeited its position of leadership in the Arab system of states to parties who have not renounced their commitments to Arab causes.

The reason why Sadat decided to make peace with Israel, and go along with it despite mounting domestic and Arab resistance, is debatable. The economic factor is attributed great importance by various scholars. For example, in his famous article "The Primacy of Economics: The Foreign Policy of Egypt" Dessouki uses the economic rationale to explain the change Sadat carried out. In the 1970s, the economic situation deteriorated rapidly; debts soared, inflation skyrocketed, unemployment increased and the growth of population reached

alarming rates. Thus, “Egyptian foreign policy has faced the important task of mobilizing external resources to ease the growing population-resources gap”[44]. As a result, “ideological and political considerations were overshadowed by more immediate economic concerns”[45]. According to many analysts, Sadat’s visit to Jerusalem (in addition to the rest of his policies) was, therefore, by large a product of economic considerations.

However, distinguished scholar Walid Kazziha offers another convincing explanation in his book *Palestine and the Arab Dilemma*. Sadat’s set of new policies were fundamentally designed to appease the new capitalist class whose influence increased dramatically in the 1970s. This new bourgeoisie, contends Kazziha, generated a considerable change in Egypt’s economic and political disposition under Sadat:

“The new disposition ought to be considered in relation to the evolution of a new ruling class under Sadat with its special vested interests, privileges and ambitions. The policies of Sadat were closely linked to such a change in the political and social fabric of Egyptian society”[46].

The new class reasoned that attracting foreign investment would not be possible without ending Egypt’s hostility to Israel since sustaining a healthy business atmosphere would require a state of regional stability. Egypt’s new capitalists therefore continued lobbying for reaching a compromise with Israel and opening up with the West. In short, Sadat’s objectives “were geared to satisfying the newly emerging bourgeoisie. The situation, therefore, required closer relations with the West, cordiality with the conservative Arabs and an understanding with Israel”[47].

Peace with Israel whom Egypt had fought four times in thirty years was undoubtedly against the wishes of most Egyptians, including the very active socialists, Nasserites and Islamist groups. But Sadat's approach was different from Nasser's. He figured out that allying with Israel (the threatening neighbor who occupied his land) and the United States (whose pressure was immense) is better for security. Nasser's formula was switched; Sadat appeased outside threats and balanced internal threats. In addition, Sadat - contrary to Nasser – was not a charismatic leader, hence not obsessed with the need to satisfy his people.

It is evident that partnership with the US, peace with Israel and economic opening comprised one package of policies. It was inconceivable to pursue one of them and discard the rest of the set. As Doran rightly noticed, “Sadat’s peace diplomacy was part and parcel of his economic liberalization at home and his turn toward the West”[48].

In conclusion, Sadat's two major foreign policy decisions (allying with the US and making peace with Israel) were the product of the high level of threat of these two parties, his idiosyncrasies (particularly his despise of Soviets and disinterest in ideology), the interests of his ruling coalition, and his type of authority.

Sadat was assassinated at the hands of Islamic fundamentalists on the 6th of October, 1981 in a military parade commemorating the victory of 1973. Hosni Mubarak (1928-), a military officer who had been Vice President since April 1975, succeeded Sadat.

Mubarak's Foreign Policy[1]

1981-1991 Restoring Sadat's Imbalances

Hosni Mubarak was nominated by the People's Assembly for the Presidency on the 7th of October, one day after Sadat's assassination. A referendum was held on the 13th and the following day he was proclaimed President. Mubarak declared in his first statements Egypt's full commitment to its obligations and emphasized that it will honor the Camp David Accords and the peace treaty with Israel. Meanwhile, Mubarak, with an eye on easing tensions with regional and international powers, made various conciliatory gestures towards the Soviet Union and Arab states. In a speech given in November, he announced that Egypt was ready to deal with anyone "without complexes" as long as he did not interfere in Egypt's internal affairs[49]. By the end of the year, "it was clear that Egypt was set on a more balanced course in her relations with the superpowers and the Arab states"[50].

One of Mubarak's primary objectives was to break Egypt's isolation in the region ensuing from the Camp David Accords without having to jeopardize its peace with Israel and its special relationship with Washington. Hostile propaganda campaigns against Arab regimes were thus stopped. In contrary to Sadat's depiction of Arabs as "dwarfs" or "kids"[51], Mubarak used a balanced and friendly discourse towards other Arab states and heads of state. Furthermore, he repeatedly announced that Egypt's peace with Israel was not hindering its Arab commitments. An early test came in June 1982 with the massive Israeli invasion of Lebanon. Constrained by the binding peace treaty, Egypt responded "with a combination of low-level nonmilitary humanitarian assistance, vocal condemnation and public support of the

[1] This section provides a brief narrative of Mubarak's era. A detailed discussion of his idiosyncrasies, type of authority and ruling coalition is provided in chapter three.

Palestinians"[52]. But when the Sabra and Shatila massacres were perpetrated under Israeli eyes in September, Mubarak - giving in to increasing domestic pressures - withdrew the Egyptian ambassador from Tel Aviv.

The incident showed that Mubarak, just like his predecessors, had to face both internal and external pressures in his pursuit of foreign policy. During his political career, Mubarak - following Sadat's example - opted for appeasing outside threats (the US and Israel) and balancing internal threats. It is important to note that Mubarak's authority corresponded to the rational-legal type elucidated by Weber. He did not seek to restore Nasser's charismatic model, and was, therefore, not severely restricted by the wishes of his people.

Mubarak seized the opportunity of the escalation of the Iraq-Iran war to prove Egypt's Arab commitments by extending excessive military aid to Iraq. More importantly, Mubarak intensified his efforts - in coordination with the Jordanians and consultancy with the Americans and Europeans - to find a political solution for the Palestinian problem. As Egypt spoke on behalf of Palestinian rights, "states like Algeria and Syria could no longer condemn Egypt for betraying the Palestinian cause"[53]. Egypt's diplomatic efforts bore fruit in September 1984 with the restoration of full diplomatic relations with Jordan. The circle of isolation was broken and it became clear that it was only a matter of time before Egypt would be fully readmitted into the Arab state system. Egypt under Mubarak was keen on playing an active role in Arab affairs, but the level of involvement of the Nasserist era was abandoned, so as not to provoke the Americans too much.

The rapprochement with the Arab world was not paralleled by any major change of attitude towards Israel. Though a freeze on normalization went into effect as a result of Israel's provocative actions (annexing the Golan Heights, invading Lebanon and the collapse of Palestinian autonomy talks) and the relations between both countries were since then dubbed as "cold peace", Egypt's policy towards Israel as a whole remained unchanged. For example, Mubarak's response to the annexation of the Golan Heights in December 1981 was no different from that of his predecessor to Israel's bombing of the Iraqi nuclear reactor a few months earlier. In short, Mubarak followed in the footsteps of Sadat to attain security. The change, argues Lesch, "was more in tone than in substance"[54]. The Egyptian leadership was still committed to peace but used normalization as a playing card to extract concessions from the Israeli side. So the Israeli demand of returning the Egyptian ambassador in Tel Aviv to

Israel was only met when the latter agreed to the principle of international arbitration regarding the disputed land of Taba.

Creating some balance in Egypt's relations with superpowers impelled Mubarak to attempt to mend the gap with the Soviet Union. A few months after his election as president, Mubarak asked the Russians to provide technical assistance to several industrial projects. Subsequently, a number of visits were exchanged and a bilateral trade agreement was signed. Full diplomatic relations with Moscow were finally restored in July 1984[55]. In the meantime, Mubarak was keen on lessening his predecessor's ultra-dependence on the United States. This was most evident in the area of military procurement. Egyptians deliberately aimed at diversifying their suppliers of weapons and of achieving some measure of self-sufficiency in arms production[56].

The case of Ras Banas base is also telling of Mubarak's intention to minimize his country's dependence on the US. The small Red Sea military base became a bone of contention between Egypt and the US for the first three years of his presidency. Sadat had offered the Americans temporary use of the base and they requested from Mubarak a realization of that promise, but Mubarak declined. The episode "represented a crucial test of Egypt's ability to preserve its independence and sovereignty while concurrently maintaining a special relationship with the United States"[57]. Again, Mubarak was sandwiched between domestic and international pressures. In this case, the level of internal threat was so high (for foreign bases evoke the unpleasant memories of the British occupation) that he had to decline the American request. The greater the level of threat, the greater is the inclination to line up with it. Despite turning down the American request, Mubarak was still committed to the special relationship with the US and keen not to anger its leadership.

Domestically, Mubarak managed to calm down the tense and furious political atmosphere Egypt went through in the summer and fall of 1981. Political prisoners were freed, the multi-party system set up by Sadat was kept and the margins of freedom of expression were widened. Parliamentary elections held in the years 1984, 1987 and 1990 were certainly still dominated by the government's National Democratic Party (NDP) and the political system remained in many aspects similar to that governed by the Arab Socialist Union in the 1960s and early 1970s. But Mubarak's Egypt was generally more tolerant to opposition than Sadat's, so long as this opposition behaved according to the rules of the game and did not

cross the red lines. In short, Mubarak's monopoly of power was not compromised but windows of participation were opened to release the beneath-the-surface friction. Undoubtedly, the regime's dependence on the army persisted. Meanwhile, Mubarak's era witnessed a rise in the influence of the new bourgeoisie, unleashed by the 'open door' policy and the economic liberalization program. The alliance between the regime on one hand and the holders of power and money on the other dated back to Sadat's time, but gained great momentum under the leadership of Mubarak. This alliance shaped many of the domestic and foreign policies undertaken under Mubarak.

Mubarak, however, was not tolerant to the package of radical economic reforms Egypt was supposed to effectuate as a remedy to its grave economic maladies. He learned the lesson of the 1977 riots and was not ready, amid a daunting economic crisis, to risk political stability on the altar of economic liberalization. Instead, he opted for a gradual reform package that would not entail a high social cost. Negotiations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) stumbled on the rock of Mubarak's inflexibility and his insistence on implementing reforms "in dozes".

The economic challenge was closely linked to the other fundamental challenge the Egyptian President could not escape facing, namely the rise of political Islam groups on the political landscape and the threat these groups directed to the legitimacy and survival of his regime. Mubarak's ascendance to power was the direct result of the assassination of his forerunner, the first of an Egyptian ruler in ages. The violent clashes that broke out the following day in the Upper Egyptian city of Assuit between Islamic militants and security forces was just an example of what was to become a characteristic of Egyptian internal politics in the 1980s and 1990s. Islamic extremists aimed at infiltrating all major institutions to advance their cause. The loyalty of the army - the chief instrument of political change in authoritarian states - was, thus, "a major preoccupation" of Mubarak[58]. He realized that the economic crisis was sowing the seeds of fanaticism and violence in Egyptian society and polity. The instability that rose again to the surface in 1986 with the bloody riots of the Central Security Forces reinforced Mubarak's convictions. His approach to ameliorate the twin problem of economic misery and Islamic extremism was likewise twofold. First, the security apparatus was given the green light to launch a massive crackdown on Islamic activists, including those who never resorted to violent means. Accordingly, the security

apparatus was conferred a greater role in dealing with the 'enemies of the regime' which, ultimately, led to a bigger input in the decision-making process. Second, priority was given to means of mitigating the negative sides of the acute economic crisis. What was proposed entailed a greater dependence on the private sector. Businessmen were invited to help breathing life into the ailing economy, an approach that increased their influence and bolstered their alliance with the regime.

The escalation of the Gulf War and the threat the Islamic republic of Iran posed to the legitimacy and territorial integrity of Arab countries (especially neighboring Gulf States) accelerated Egypt's return to the Arab fold. After all, Egypt did not change, but it "was the Arab state system that had changed"[59]. Because of the Gulf War, "a trend toward greater realism, less rhetoric, and a more serious search for common ground—gathered steam"[60]. Obviously, Egypt who preached Arabs about the benefits of realism since the second half of the seventies was the prime winner of this trend. Moreover, the fact that the Egyptian-Israeli peace has endured and has proven that it is here to stay was "a psychological watershed in Middle East politics"[61]. It persuaded Arabs of accepting a peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict which necessitated of course active Egyptian participation. Egypt regained its full membership in the Organization of the Islamic Conference in January 1987. In November of the same year, the Arab league's summit in Amman permitted its member states to reestablish diplomatic ties with Cairo. Egypt was formally reintegrated into the Arab system.

From one perspective, Mubarak's path in the 1980s can be seen as a qualified success; Egypt under his leadership managed to correct many of the deviations resulting from the frantic years of Sadat's presidency. Back to the Arab world, friendly with the Soviet Union and other major powers as well as experimenting with democracy domestically, Egypt, it seemed, produced a major positive change in its foreign and domestic orientation. From another perspective, Mubarak's achievements were limited and the changes he introduced were more cosmetic than real. Egypt's dependence on the US, for example, was not altered. As Amer put it, "Egypt continues to maintain a "special" relationship with one superpower and normalized relations with the other, calling it balanced relations"[62]. Moreover, the political system he ran, despite all improvements, remained for the most part authoritarian. Additionally, the economy was still in shambles and on the decline. The enthusiasm with

which Mubarak was met in his early years in office turned into disappointment. As Cantori accurately explained, Mubarak initially:

"had benefited from the contrast with Sadat. He was calm, quiet, administratively and technically competent, and free from an aura of corruption…..With time, however, Mubarak's initially welcomed personal qualities have become less attractive. Increasingly there has come to be an awareness that he is a leader who reacts rather than proacts"[63].

In its broad lines, Hosni Mubarak remained faithful to the general policies of Anwar Sadat. The relationship with Washington, peace with Israel and some kind of commitment to economic liberalization and political liberalization (combined with repression of the opposition when it became threatening) at home all followed the path designed and initiated by Sadat in the mid-seventies. In other words, in the quest for security, Mubarak continued to appease outside threats and balance internal ones. The change had more to do with style than essence. Still pragmatic and realist, Mubarak was more moderate and less dramatic. Mubarak who is described as a cautious man[64], with "no grand idea that would land him in trouble"[65] and "has neither worldwide vision nor a sense of historical processes"[66] is not the type of leader that would embark on major policy change plans. Instead, politics of the status quo gained the upper hand and dominated political life. Generally speaking, Egypt's foreign policy under Mubarak has been stagnant and motionless compared to the activity and dynamism it experienced during his energetic predecessors. Moreover, Mubarak seemed more overwhelmed with domestic issues than foreign policy matters[67]. The economic challenge and the urge to preserve power have taken precedence over regional and international ambitions. In fact, foreign policy has been employed to improve the critical economic standing at home.

1991-2001: The Dominance of the Status Quo

Everything in Mubarak's foreign policy in the 1990s resembled his policies of the 1980s. Regionally, Egypt tried to take advantage of the momentum the peace conference held in Madrid had generated to promote direct negotiations between Israelis and both Palestinians and Syrians. Even though Egypt was not directly involved in the Oslo negotiations (and is believed not be informed of it in the first place), one can not deny that its efforts in advocating reconciliation and bridging gaps between belligerent parties bore fruit. The signing of the

Palestinian-Israeli Declaration of Principles (1993) and the Jordan-Israel Peace Treaty (1994), as well as the crucial progress materialized with the Syrians before the death of Israel's Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin would, most probably, not have taken place had Egypt been aloof. And when later negotiations stumbled or violence resurrected, it was Cairo and Sharm El-Shiekh that hosted gatherings whose mission was to 'rescue faltering peace'.

Egypt's peace strategy aimed at achieving a number of objectives. First, peace nurtured the stability and order needed badly for economic development at home. Second, Egypt's services, on that front, augmented Egyptian-American relations and ensured that no cut in financial and military assistance would take place. Indeed, in the face of recurrent attempts made by Congressmen to cut or reduce the level of financial assistance, US administrations' uniform reply was that Egypt's contribution is vital to America's interest in the strategic Middle East. Third, with a diminishing regional role and a shrinking of resources, the Arab-Israeli conflict became the last arena where Egypt can play a leading role in the Arab world.

The demise of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s intensified Egypt's dependence on the United States. The triumphant US asserted its political and military supremacy worldwide (and specifically in the Middle East), and that appeared difficult to contest by regional players. Obviously, Egypt's maneuverability space shrank and its options became limited. The availability (or not) of allies plays into the choice of strategy. Obviously, Egypt opted for solidifying its alliance with the US after the downfall of the Soviet Union.

Domestically, economic and political liberalization were not abandoned, but were not unconditionally embraced too. In reality, the 'one step forward, one step back' idiom best describes the oscillating fashion with which the state dealt with these two issues. Various measures (e.g. privatization, cutting subsidies, controlling budget deficits, etc) were taken to appease international creditors and local capitalists, but they stopped the moment the state, by sheer instinct, felt that it was losing control of the economic sector, or that measures proposed were potentially lethal to its stability. Likewise, in order to appear 'democratic', various cosmetic changes were introduced in the political system. Longevity of the regime, naturally, needed extra legitimacy at home, and good reputation abroad. But, in essence, the authoritarian regime established in 1952 endured, in fact exhibited a remarkable ability to reproduce itself against all odds.

Apparently, the crucial battle against militant Islamists was won by the end of the 1990s by means of repression; thousands of suspects were jailed, hundreds executed and human rights were breached day after day. In tandem, political life remained strictly controlled. The activities of political parties and professional guilds continued to be restricted, elections were ragged as regular as a Swiss watch, and rubber-stamp parliaments faithfully served the regime instead of monitoring the performance of the Executive. And, needless to say, maximal control of security agencies, the chief bulwark of the regime against dissidents, was exercised. In short, the primacy of balancing against internal threats to the regime lived on.

The second decade of Mubarak's presidency seemed less successful than the first. By the new millennium, three major crises faced the Egyptian leadership, to which all it seemed helpless and incompetent. The first was related to Egypt's economy. After a few years of improvement in economic indicators, a cash shortage crisis emerged in the year 2000. All measures designed to contain it failed, including the decision to float the Egyptian Pound in January 2003. With the rise of prices, inevitably, discontent and frustration rose too.

Regionally, the collapse of the peace process and the eruption of the second Palestinian *'Intifada'* dealt a severe blow to Egypt's peace efforts. This coincided with a conspicuous decline in Egypt's regional standing and its ability to control events in the Arab world, including in the Sudan whose Mashakus agreement took the Egyptian government by surprise. On the international level, Egypt's 'special' relationship with the United States was put to a new test because of the events of September, 11. The newly-elected administration - led by the inexperienced George W. Bush - considered reform of the Middle East's dictatorships to be the panacea for the threat of Islamic terrorism. Accordingly, it pressured its Arab allies to democratize and introduce political reform.

Conclusion:

As explained in chapter one, no single factor explains the behavior of Third World states. The type of response of Third World states to the web of internal and external threats they face depends on the interplay between a number of factors, including the level of threat, the idiosyncrasies of the leader and the interests of his ruling coalition.

Under both Nasser and Sadat, the level of external pressure (exerted by the US and Israel) was mostly very high, so was the availability of allies, but the type of response was contradictory; Nasser balanced it while Sadat appeased it. The reason behind this difference lies in the rest of factors outlined, which is the personal difference between both men, their varied type of authority and the divergence between the ruling coalitions of both leaders. Table1 highlights these differences and how they translated into a different foreign policy posture.

Table 1: Nasser Versus Sadat

	Nasser	**Sadat**
External threats	Balanced	Appeased
Internal Threats	Appeased	Balanced
Availability of Allies	Yes	Yes
Idiosyncrasies	Obsessed with independence and leadership, promoting pan-Arabism and non-alignment	Pragmatic, not interested in grand theories
Ruling Coalition	Pursuing national goals and aspirations	Tied to Western interests and markets
Type of Legitimacy	Charismatic	Rational-Legal Traditional

Mubarak did not depart from Sadat's line in foreign policy. In fact, he took to new heights his socioeconomic orientation and bolstered his internal and international alliances. The new bourgeoisie augmented its alliance with the regime at the very same time it broadened its relationship with Western markets. Mubarak is, also, the paragon of the rational-legal type of legitimacy. Moreover, his personal traits (and the disappearance of the Soviet Union since 1992) assured a continuation of the method of appeasing external threats.

Exceptionally, some decisions taken by any of the presidents diverged from the general line they had pursued throughout their political careers. That occurred when a noticeable change in one of the variables took place, particularly the level of threat or

availability of allies. By nature, the idiosyncrasies of leaders, type of their legitimacy and interests of the ruling coalition are fixed and not very much prone to change; in contrast, changes in the domestic and international environments are frequent and, sometimes, quick. For example, Mubarak did not allow the institution of US military bases because of the strong internal resistance to the idea. So variations in the level of threat are as important as the leader and his internal alliance.

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[1]Ahmed Esmat Abdel-Meguid, *The Times of Collapse and Victory: Half a Century of Great Transformations* (Cairo: Dar Al-Shorooq, 1999), 30; Mohamed Hassanein Heikal "Egyptian Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs* 56 (July 1978): 718; Gamal Abdel-Gawad, "Egypt and the Arab World," in *Egypt's Renaissance and the International System: Confrontation or Maneuver*, ed. Mohamed Al-Sayed Saeed et al (Cairo: Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, 1999), 74.

[2]Heikal, "Egyptian Foreign Policy," 718.

[3]Michael Doran, "Egypt: Pan-Arabism in Historical Context," in *Diplomacy in the Middle East: The International Relations of Regional and Outside Powers*, ed. Carl Brown (London & New York: I. B. Tauris, 2001), p.99.

[4]Gabriel Warburg, "Egypt's Regional Policy from Muhammad Ali to Muhammad Anwar Al-Sadat," in *The Contemporary Mediterranean World*, ed. Carl Pinkele and Adamantia Pollis (New York: Praeger, 1983), 126.

[5]For a detailed analysis of the Egyptian decision to join the first Arab-Israeli war see Mohamed Hassanein Heikal, *Thrones and Armies: How the Conflict Exploded in Palestine* (Cairo: Dar Al-Shorooq, 1998).

[6]Michael Doran, "Egypt: Pan-Arabism in Historical Context," 103.

[7]Gamal Abdel-Nasser, *The Philosophy of the Revolution* (Cairo: Information Agency, 1954), 68.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Ibid., p. 73.

[10]Fawaz Gerges, *The Superpowers and the Middle East: Regional and International Politics, 1955-1967* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), 25.

[11]Ibid., p. 32.

[12]Ibid., p. 35.

[13]A. Dawisha, *Egypt in the Arab World: The Elements of Foreign Policy* (London: Macmillan, 1976), 131.

[14]Fawaz Gerges, *The Superpowers and the Middle East*, 52.

[15]Mohammad Abd el-Wahab Sayed-Ahmed, *Nasser and American Foreign Policy, 1952-1956* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 1989), 120.

[16]Fawaz Gerges, *The Superpowers and the Middle East*, 56.

[17]Muhammad Abd el-Wahab Sayed-Ahmed, *Nasser and American Foreign Policy*, 124.

[18]Fawaz Gerges, *The Superpowers and the Middle East*, 65.

[19]Mohamed Hassanein Heikal, *The Suez Files* (Cairo: Al-Ahram Center for Publishing and Translation, 1986), 554.

[20]Economic benefits drew the attention of Egyptian rulers to the Arab world long before the free officer's revolution. According to Ghada Hashem Talhami:

"The Wafd's interest in strengthening pan-Arab ties, or at least coopting pan-Arab plans, was clearly motivated by more than a desire to wrest the leadership of the Arab bloc from Transjordan and Iraq. By the early 1940s, and with the independence of much of the Arab region, new economic realities began to attract Egypt's attention. Various segments of the Egyptian political elite, and certainly the Wafd, began to look to Arab markets as a potential outlet for their surplus products and labor force". (Quoted from Gregory Aftandilian, *Egypt's Bid for Arab Leadership: Implications for US Policy* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1993), 55).

[21]A. Dawisha, *Egypt in the Arab World*, 110.

[22]Fawaz Gerges, *The Superpowers and the Middle East*, 90.

[23]Nael Mohamed Shama, *The Egyptian-Syrian Unity, 1958-1961: The Inevitable Divorce* (Cairo: M.A. Thesis, The American University in Cairo, 2001), 30-1.

[24]In March 1957 - less than one year before the declaration of the union - Nasser made his stance clear by saying: "I am not thinking in terms of any federation or confederation or such constitutional formulae for the present. They will not help out our cause so much as unity of thought and faith in Arab Nationalism will. In fact, such constitutional frames can only create antagonisms to the Arab ideal and become weapons in the hands of our enemies to sabotage the ideal". (Gordon Torrey, *Syrian Politics and the Military, 1945-1958* (Ohio: Ohio State UP, 1964), 332).

[25]Mohamed Hassanein Heikal, *Years of Upheaval* (Cairo: Al-Ahram Center for Publishing and Translation, 1988), 281.

[26]Raymond Hinnebusch, "The Foreign Policy of Egypt," in *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States*, ed. Raymond Hinnebusch and Anoushiravan Ehteshami (Boulder & London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002), 99.

[27]R. Stephen Humphreys, "From Imperialism to the New World Order: The Middle East in Search of a Future," in *Between Memory and Desire: The Middle East in a Troubled Age*, ed. R. Stephen Humphreys (Cairo: AUC Press, 2000), 43.

[28]Fawaz Gerges, *The Superpowers and the Middle East*, 145.

[29]Michael Doran, "Pan-Arabism in Historical Context," 113.

[30]Gabriel Warburg, "Egypt's Regional Policy from Muhammad Ali to Muhammad Anwar Al-Sadat," 129.

[31]Mohamed Hassanein Heikal, *1967: The Explosion* (Cairo: Al-Ahram Center for Publishing and Translation, 1990), 220-2.

[32]Fawaz Gerges, *The Superpowers and the Middle East*, 214.

[33]Maridi Nahas, "State-Systems and Revolutionary Challenge: Nasser, Khomeini and the Middle East," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 17 (November 1985): 516.

[34]Gregory Aftandilian, *Egypt's Bid for Arab Leadership*, 24.

[35]Nasser used to refer to Sadat as '*Bikbashi Aywa'* (Colonel Yes-Man), an indication of the fact that Sadat spent his political life in the shadows of Nasser. (Adeed Dawisha, "Arab Regimes: Legitimacy and Foreign Policy," in *The Arab State*, ed. Giacomo Luciani (London: Routledge, 1990), 291).

[36]El-Sayed Amin Shalaby, "Egypt's Foreign Policy, 1952-1992: Some Personal Reflections," *Security Dialogue* 23, no. 3 (December 1992): 109.

[37]Ali E. Hillal Dessouki, "The Primacy of Economics: The Foreign Policy of Egypt," in *The Foreign Policies of Arab States: The Challenge of Change*, ed. Bahgat Korany and Ali E. Hillal Dessouki (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), 156.

[38]Ali E. Hillal Dessouki, "The Primacy of Economics: The Foreign Policy of Egypt," In *The Foreign Policies of Arab States*, ed. Bahgat Korany and Ali E. Hillal Dessouki (Cairo: AUC Press, 1984), 129.

[39]Ibid., 119.

[40]Gabriel Warburg, "Egypt's Regional Policy from Muhammad Ali to Muhammad Anwar Al-Sadat," 133.

[41]Ali E. Hillal Dessouki, "The Primacy of Economics: The Foreign Policy of Egypt," 1991, 166.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Meetings between Arabs and Israelis took place frequently before. Jordanian Hashemites, Lebanese Maronites and the Moroccan King all held direct secret talks with Israeli officials.

[44]Ali E. Hillal Dessouki, "The Primacy of Economics," 1991, 161.

[45]Ibid.

[46]Walid Kazziha, *Palestine in the Arab Dilemma* (London: Croom Helm, 1979), 87.

[47]Ibid., 92.

[48]Michael Doran, "Pan-Arabism in Historical Context," 115.

[49]Derek Hopwood, *Egypt: Politics and Society, 1945-1990* (London & New York: Routledge, 1993), 184.

[50]P.J. Vatikiotis, *The History of Modern Egypt: From Muhammad Ali to Mubarak* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1991), 440.

[51]Sadat had a long record of insulting Arab peoples and heads of state. He described Libya's Gaddafi as "crazy", Syria's Assad as a "clown and Soviet client" and King Hussein of Jordan as a "liar whose conduct depends on the financial assistance he gets from Saudi Arabia". Arab peoples were portrayed as "ignorant", "backward" and "uncivilized" compared to Israelis. (Ahmed Youssef Ahmed, "Continuity and Change in the Foreign Policy of President Mubarak," *Al-Siyassa Al-Dawliya* (April 1982): 120-1.)

[52]Louis Cantori, "Egyptian Policy under Mubarak: The Politics of Continuity and Change," in *The Middle East after the Israeli Invasion of Lebanon*, ed. Robert Freedman (Syracuse: Syracuse UP, 1986), 332.

[53]Ali E. Hillal Dessouki, "The Primacy of Economics," 1991, 183.

[54]Ann Mosely Lesch, "Egyptian-Israeli Relations: Normalization or Special Ties," in *Israel, Egypt and the Palestinians: From Camp David to Intifada*, ed. Ann Mosely Lesch and Mark Tessler (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana UP, 1989), 61.

[55]Gamal Ali Zahran, *Who Rules Egypt? A Study in Political Decision-Making in Egypt and the Third World* (Cairo: n.p., 1993), 133-4.

[56]Louis Cantori, "Egyptian Policy under Mubarak," 335; Louis Cantori, "Egypt Reenters the Arab State System," in *The Middle East From the Iran-Contra Affair to the Intifada*, ed. Robert O. Freedman (Syracuse: Syracuse UP, 1990), 343.

[57]Mona Omran Elshafei, *Patron and Client: Egypt's Pursuit of an Independent Foreign Policy in the Context of its Special Relationship with the United States, from 1982 to 1988* (Cairo: M.A. Thesis, The American University in Cairo, 1990), 115.

[58]P.J. Vatikiotis, *The History of Modern Egypt*, 445.

[59]Louis Cantori, "Unipolarity and Egyptian Hegemony in the Middle East," in *The Middle East after Iraq's Invasion of Kuwait*, ed. Robert Freedman (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1993), 336.

[60]Joseph Lorenz, *Egypt and the Arabs: Foreign Policy and the Search for National Identity* (Boulder, San Francisco and Oxford: Westview Press, 1990), 103.

[61]Ibid., p. 106.

[62]Mohamed Youssef Amer, *Egypt between the Superpowers: Continuity and Change in Egyptian Foreign Policy under Mubarak* (California: Naval Postgraduate School, 1984), 118.

[63]Louis Cantori, "Egypt Reenters the Arab State System," 344-5.

[64]Mubarak's critics "see (his) caution ultimately as immobility" ("Egypt" in *The Middle East* (Washington D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Inc., 1994), 209).

[65]Ajami is quoting here a young Egyptian academic (Fouad Ajami, "The Battle for Egypt's Soul," *US News & World Report*, 27 June 1994).

[66]Ephraim Dowek, *Israeli-Egyptian Relations, 1980-2000* (London: Frank Cass, 2001), 290.

[67]Louis Cantori, "Egyptian Policy under Mubarak: The Politics of Continuity and Change," 327.

CHAPTER III
THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS:
THE PRIMACY OF THE EXECUTIVE

Introduction

This chapter delves into the foreign policy decision-making process of the Egyptian state. It starts by highlighting some of the prime characteristics of decision-making in Egypt throughout history. Since Egypt's regime is highly centralized, the chapter then gives a detailed overview of the role of the president, the principal actor in the process since the 1952 revolution. A lengthy review of President Hosni Mubarak, his personality traits, characteristics and policy approaches is given. The primacy of the President notwithstanding, other institutions are also involved in the decision-making process. For example, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Intelligence play an important role, pertaining to gathering information and implementing policies. Likewise, the military establishment has since the coup of 1952 been a constant player in Egyptian politics. Attention is given too to the rising role of business associations. The last section sums up the major findings of the chapter.

I Foreign Policy Decision-Making in Egypt:

Developing countries share, generally speaking, many characteristics: authoritarian rule, low levels of institutionalization, the absence (or nascence) of democratic traditions, the high level of political instability, a strictly controlled media, public opinion and institutions of political participation in addition to a cluster of security and economic challenges. Moreover, the decision-making process lacks the complexity of its Western counterparts and constitutional constraints on decision-makers are generally non-existent.

In these states, institutions are weak and personalized rule is the norm. Whether he is a president, tribal leader, or monarch, "this individual remains the final decision-maker and arbiter on all major policy matters."[1] King Hassan II of Morocco even defended the personification of politics:

"I am obliged to personify power as strongly as possible, for people do not obey a program or a plan. They obey men, a team of men, and it is all for the best if that team is embodied in a chief and symbolized by one face, one voice, one personality."[2]

Thus, foreign policy decision-making in the Third World is dominated for the most part by one individual: the man at the helm. It is true that in some states, the military or interest groups do play major political roles (e.g. the military in Turkey, the clergy in Iran), but the leader's position in most of these states remains dominant. This is where studying the personalities and idiosyncrasies of leaders of developing countries derives its importance from.

In Egypt, this factor acquires more weight because of peculiar historical reasons. By virtue of the hydraulic nature of the Egyptian state, centralization of rule became easy, in fact inevitable, for the concentration of the population along the banks of the Nile and the tightly-packed Delta facilitated the process of taxation, hence loyalty to the state. In sharp contrast to nomadic societies, moreover, Egyptians – who are peasants more than anything else - loved to settle down and disliked movement and immigration. The easiness of taxation and the economic need for a central irrigation system effortlessly paved the way for political centralization. Therefore "From the Pharaohs to Nasser there had always been one powerful ruler"[3].

For historical reasons too, Egyptians are also known for transforming their rulers into deities. Under thirty-one Pharaonic dynasties that ruled for about 2500 years, the pharaoh was a ruler and a god at the same time. In the cult of ancient Egyptians, the leader – the pharaoh – was granted phenomenal powers and thus turned into a near deity. Professor of Philosophy at Kuwait University Imam Abdel-Fatah wrote about the traits of pharaohs as believed (and stereotyped) by ancient Egyptians:

- The pharaoh was seen as sacred, too sacred to be directly addressed by any of his subjects. Not only that, but anything related to him was sacred as well.
- The pharaoh was granted gods' knowledge; he knew everything that happened and everything that would happen. Hence, he was the icon of wisdom.
- Orders given by the Pharaoh should be immediately executed because they represented the will of gods.
- The Pharaoh was perceived as sinless; he never committed sins and never held feelings of hatred or resentment towards anybody.
- The Pharaoh was the link between people and priests. He was the Chief of Priests who appointed other priests. He alone could know what the gods of justice wanted.

Accordingly, the will of the pharaoh was recognized as embodying the happiness and welfare of people.

- The Law was absent at the time. The commands and instructions of the King represented the real law.[4]

Centralization can also be explained by some dominant cultural and social traditions of the Egyptian people. Acceptance of this type of governance is facilitated by the way power is dispersed in Egypt's core societal unit: the village. In any of Egypt's five-thousand villages, authority had been, for centuries, conferred to one man: *'al-rais'* or *'al-umda'* (the headman). As a result, "a powerful charismatic leadership was in all probability, more relevant to the prevailing Egyptian situation than other types of institutions."[5]

After the death of the Prophet, Islamic political culture reinforced the centralization of power. The writings of many Muslim philosophers, thinkers and theologians embodied concepts such as the non-separation of religious and temporal power, the Caliph's right to claim obedience and the prohibition of rebellion. The fourteenth century philosopher Ibn Khaldun, for instance, claims that it "is in the nature of states that authority becomes concentrated in one person."[6] Obedience to the ruler was reflected in the famous juristic maxim "sixty years of tyranny are better than one hour of civil strife".[7] Al-Ghazali, the distinguished eleventh century theologian, instructed that "An unjust ruler should not be deposed if strife would follow".[8] Al-Ash'ari also denied Muslims revolting against the ruler even if he failed to perform his duties.

Egyptians have been described by historians and anthropologists as docile people, who obey authority and are not inclined to revolt. The country's strategic location at the heart of the old world's three continents coupled with the docility of its inhabitants invited outside powers to intervene and occupy the land of Egypt. To many, Egypt's history is, therefore, nothing but a series of subjugation to foreign rulers (e.g. Romans, Persians, Arabs, French, and British). The docile character of Egyptian people was described by Amr Ibn al-Aas – the first Muslim captor of the land of Egypt – in a letter sent to Caliph Omar: "Its people are playthings, its soil is gold, and it belongs to those strong enough to take it."[9] Centuries later, the prominent political sociologist Ibn Khaldun[10] (1332-1406), whose main scholarly obsession was centered on what keeps societies together and what drives them apart, wrote:

"Some countries are destined for empire. The ruler need never worry about protest movements or revolt which are rare: such is Egypt's case…There we find only one sovereign and his obedient subjects."[11]

Indisputably, political culture is not rigid and unchanging, but some of its aspects, one must not forget, persist. Apparently, the Egyptians remained faithful to that long-standing characteristic. In a novel written by Egypt's renowned writer Tawfik Al-Hakeem (1898-1987), a conversation takes place between an English administrator and a mystic Frenchman who sees the deep meanings of things. The wise Frenchman says that the Egyptians "still have the spirit of their ancient temples; all Egypt needs is a man to worship"[12].

Throughout its long history, thus, Egypt had become accustomed to authoritarian rule, where political power and authority is concentrated in the hands of the executive, be he a pharaoh, a caliph, a wali, a khedive, a monarch or a president. No wonder, then, that when King Farouk in 1944 heard the phrase "the will of the people" from a Wafdist politician, Abdel-Salam Fahmy Gomaa, he replied angrily by saying: "My good Pasha, the will of the people emanates from my will."[13]

This kind of political structure had endured even after the hereditary rule of Mohamed Ali's family was terminated by the coup of 1952. An excellent book-length study on foreign policy decision-making in Egypt under Nasser revealed that "the decision-making process in Egypt centred around the person of the President, and as such, can hardly be referred to as a process."[14] Nasser did not work in total isolation from other organs of the process, but "it was he who dictated the frequency and the intensity of this interaction with the other organs."[15] In other words, the foreign policy decision-making process in the 1950s and 1960s "in form and content, seems to have depended almost entirely on the President's own discretion."[16]

The centralized decision-making structure remained intact under Sadat. In fact, whereas fourteen people had known beforehand of Nasser's decision to nationalize the Suez Canal Company (1956), only two knew in advance of Sadat's decision to drive out the Soviet advisors from Egypt (1972) and only his Foreign Minister was informed about his intention to go to Jerusalem (1977).[17] Studying Sadat's public discourse using content analysis revealed his heavy tendency to refer to himself as the center of the political process. Excerpts of his speeches listed by the study included:

- “When I received the reply of the Soviet leaders to the message I had sent them after the Moscow meeting, I found out that there is no other choice than the decisions I took.”
- “I decided in front of you that nothing prevents us from conducting a dialogue on all issues.”
- “As I took the decision of the October war, I took another decision to reform the Egyptian economy.”
- “In July 1972, I gave orders to the Soviet experts to leave and in October 1973, I gave an order to the armed forces.”[18]

It is fair thus to conclude that, for Sadat, “there was no difference between himself and the state, they are one and the same.”[19] In fact, Sadat had occasionally used the possessive pronoun “my” to refer to the Egyptian people, army, constitution…etc. This reveals an inner-conviction of being the king who is God’s shadow on earth, the feudalist who owns the land and people, the pharaoh who is equated with God.

Foreign policy was also personalized under the leadership of President Hosni Mubarak. An example of this is his statement: “I study everything and I ask directly. When I settle on something, I take the decision.”[20] Indeed, his discourse is replete too with references to his domination of the decision-making process.

Under Nasser, Sadat and Mubarak, therefore, the president had an almost absolute monopoly on foreign affairs. The role of other institutions (like the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the military establishment) was confined to information-gathering and advice in the pre-decision stage and execution in the post-decision stage. According to scholar (and later UN Secretary-General) Boutros Boutros-Ghali, “the formulation of foreign policy …is strictly the prerogative and sole responsibility of the Chief Executive. The extent to which the Executive is guided by the council of his principle associates, including the Minister of Foreign Affairs, is a matter of personal choice.”[21] In fact, the ‘*Pharaohization*’ of Egyptian rulers has continued thousands of years beyond the demise of the pharaohs. Heikal wrote that Sadat had once told him: “Gamal (Abdel-Nasser) and I are the last great pharaohs in Egypt’s history.”[22] Sadat also told the renowned writer Ahmed Bahaa Eddin that he was “the last pharaoh”, hence “does not need a constitution to rule with”.[23] To the US President Jimmy Carter, Sadat said something similar: “People look at me as the inheritor of Gamal Abdel-Nasser, but this is not true. I don’t rule Egypt according to his style. I rule it the way Ramsis II did. This is what the Egyptian people - by nature - understand and want.”[24] In a way, thus, the

assassins of Sadat did not exaggerate when they self-righteously proclaimed that they had "killed the pharaoh".

And just like pharaohs considered themselves above criticism, modern Egyptian rulers did not tolerate it and were on the whole reluctant to accept it, even from the closest of advisors. Sadat, for example, was known for getting profoundly irritated by unfavorable critique. He once complained to his ambassador to Washington - Ashraf Ghorbal - about the 'misconduct' of the opposition parties and their harsh criticism: "I am the one who found this opposition. It did not exist beforehand." When Ghorbal reminded him that he had been an active member of the opposition during the liberal phase (1922-1952) and that it was just normal for opposition parties to voice different opinions than those of the government, Sadat retorted: "Don't philosophize".[25]

Moreover, the Egyptian constitutions of 1956, 1958, 1964 and 1971 had reinforced political centralization as they gave the president draconian powers and made other organs of the bureaucracy entirely subordinate to him. The 1971 constitution stipulates that the President has the right to appoint and dismiss the Prime Minister and ministers, is the head of the government, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, the supreme head of the judiciary and the President of the High Council of Police, in addition to, heading the ruling party (i.e. The Arab Socialist Union and later the National Democratic Party). Moreover, the President is neither accountable to the People's Assembly, nor to a free press or opposition parties; in fact his impeachment is only possible in the case of national treason.[26]

The foreign policy decision-making process in Egypt oscillates between the 'one man show' type (clearly exemplified in Sadat's decision to go to Jerusalem[27]) and what Charles Hermann called the 'leader-staff group' type (or the 'presidential center' type) where the process, as Dessouki explained, is dominated by one authoritative man "who can act alone, with little or no consultation with other people or institutions except for a small group of subordinate advisors. These advisors are appointed by the leader and have no autonomous power base."[28] In the Egyptian case, these advisors include, but are not limited to, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, head of General Intelligence, Minister of Defense, and political advisors. The influence of some individuals, nevertheless, do not stem from their position in the bureaucratic hierarchy, but rather depend "on their personal relations and access to the president."[29] Hence, Mohamed Heikal's influence in Nasser's regime did not depend at all on

his position as editor-in-chief of *Al-Ahram*, but instead on his closeness to, and friendship with, the sovereign (i.e. President Nasser). Similarly, the privileged position of Osama Al-Baz under Mubarak did not originate from his position as first undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs but rather from his high-status position as the president's chief political advisor.[30] So accessibility is, in general, the key to impacting the process; anyone's influence on the formulation of policies is "directly proportional to (his) accessibility to the President."[31] To be sure, office counts, for it provides both access to the president and authority in its sphere of influence, but personal connections can play a role, even if not supported by office.

Politics in the Egyptian state, one must not forget, is structured in a top-down fashion; the president is situated at the top surrounded by his cabinet and aides (i.e. the ruling elite). Beneath lies a class of technocrats (lawyers, engineers, physicians, merchants…etc) whose weight does not make up more than twenty percent of the population, but its influence is profoundly disproportionate to its size; they receive approximately fifty percent of the nation's income and they represent the attentive public who can play important roles in the public realm. However, by means of patronage and repression, they are assimilated into the system and discouraged from joining the opposition. At the very bottom of the hierarchy, there is the majority of the population, deserted and excluded from any participation in politics. In this hierarchy, therefore, output institutions (like the bureaucracy, police and army) outgrew input institutions (such as political parties, syndicates and interest groups).[32]

The autonomy of the state of domestic constraints is even more compounded in its handling of foreign relations. In contrast to other Arab leaders who had to carefully monitor their constituencies' wishes and be alert to their reservations, Egyptian leaders could pursue foreign relations in almost perfect immunity. Hence, an Egyptian academic was right when he said that Mubarak "is the sayyid (the sovereign)…He does not have to justify himself"[33].

From Nasser to Mubarak: Some General Observations[1]

Due to geopolitical realities, demographic weight and cultural influence, the pursuit of regional leadership has been a constant feature of Egypt's foreign policy as Egyptians see themselves as the natural leaders of the Arab world. In the words of Fouad Ajami:

[1] A brief discussion of President Mubarak is provided in this section, as the next section of this chapter is entirely designated to him.

"*Whether Egyptians were dealing with liberal ideas, building a modern army, making movies, writing books, exporting revolution, or conducting diplomacy with Israel, they were convinced that they of course excelled and led and that other Arabs would follow*"[34].

Yet, the type of leadership running the country implied how that role is to be executed. Nasser believed that Egypt's hegemony can not be imposed without a constantly active foreign policy. Sadat, on the other hand, believed that Egypt is destined to lead and that Arabs are bound - sooner or later - to follow in Egypt's footsteps. Egypt's leading position was seen by him "as a structural property, not a behavioral attribute, as a property that could not be challenged or taken away"[35]. That is why he was not much concerned with Egypt's loneliness as a result of its separate peace with Israel. Sadat knew that this was a passing phase and that Egypt's chief attributes in the region would lead her neighbors to ultimately succumb to her choices. Sadat replied confidently to Israeli Defense Minister Ezer Weizman's inquiry about the likelihood of other Arab states joining the peace process:

"*The Jordanians will follow our footsteps. So will the Syrians. Things in the Arab world happen the way Egypt decides*"[36].

In a similar vein, he answered a question by TV anchor Barbara Walters by saying: "This is a fact. War or peace is decided in Egypt, because as I told you, we are forty million"[37]. Apparently, Sadat's expectations were too optimistic and too inattentive of the region's realities as it took the Arab parties ten whole years after Sadat's demise to sit on the negotiating table with Israel in Madrid. Mubarak's views on Egypt's leadership were similar to those of Sadat. Both men "shared an assumption that the rest of the [Arab] world had no choice but to follow Egypt's lead…[But] Mubarak approached the differences with the Arabs with the dispassion and plain speaking that have marked his style on most issues"[38]. Though Mubarak was less concerned with hegemonic ambitions, he still felt threatened by the emergence of a leadership candidate in the Middle East. The rise of Iraq as a regional - and potentially hegemonic - power in the aftermath of the Iran-Iraq war worried the Egyptian leadership. Egyptians were not comfortable, for example, with the fact that the Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat was spending too much of his time in Baghdad. Mubarak's chief political advisor, Osama Al-Baz, argued that "Arafat should be persuaded to spend more time in Cairo, instead"[39]. Egypt seemed less sensitive about the dominance of the US than about local powers experimenting with leadership.[40]

Under Nasser, Egypt - with an eye on regional hegemony - became a revisionist state. Nasser believed that the role of Egypt's foreign policy is to bolster its central position in the region and maintain its independence from the plots of superpowers. Both roles required a great deal of risk-taking, an attribute that Nasser did not lack. From the early 1950s to the early 1970s, the natural sphere of influence was the Arab world, and Arab causes and rights were championed by Egypt. Sadat shifted this policy. After the 1973 war, Egypt "not only adopted but embraced and intensified the movement toward being a status-quo power"[41]. Moreover, Egypt broke Arab ranks by joining the American-Israeli camp and was ostracized by its Arab brethren. Sadat reasoned that Egypt's foreign policy had to maintain the alliance with Americans (and the West in general) in order to revive Egypt's economy, via providing access to US aid and technology. Expanding the nascent Egypt-Israel peace to include other Arab states was also on Sadat's agenda. The trend continued under Mubarak. The promotion of moderation and peace and access to international funding were a cornerstone of his foreign policy.

Regime survival considerations can not be excluded from the calculations of Egyptian rulers. Clearly, a policy that would jeopardize an authoritarian regime's grip on power would not be pursued. Likewise, policies adopted and ideologies embraced could be easily revoked if the regime's survival was at risk. Nasser's request of American military aid in face of the 1956 tripartite aggression and Sadat's curtailing of the nascent democratic experiment as soon as it appeared to threaten his rule are two cases in point. Mubarak's vigorous support of Gulf states against revolutionary Iran (whose links to Islamic groups in Egypt have been reported) can be explained using the same rationale.

Independence remained a main objective of President Nasser's foreign policy. A study utilizing content analysis showed that 66% of Nasser's references to an Egyptian external role had to do with pursuing an active independent role[42]. To Sadat, however, independence came as a second priority to economic welfare. Independence was thus forsaken on the altar of American economic and military aid. The fact that Nasser reluctantly gave concessions on his country's sovereignty as a result of his 'defeat' in 1967 while Sadat willingly forfeited his country's independence in the aftermath of its 'victory' in 1973 demonstrates the different level of importance each of them attached to the value of independence. Mubarak tried to

mitigate his predecessor's paramount dependence on the US in the 1980s but the results remained limited.

Nasser utilized pan-Arabism and non-alignment in order to achieve his political objectives. Under Sadat, however, ideological considerations were eclipsed by more urgent economic concerns. With the intensification of the economic problem at home and the change of the role ideology played in inter-Arab affairs, Mubarak had no difficulty in praising the values of 'rationality' and 'wisdom', which constitute the antithesis of ideology. Under Mubarak, policies that seemed to breach Arabism were continuously justified in the name of rationality.

Nasser made use of propaganda as an effective foreign policy tool. The power of the microphone was continuously harnessed from the Baghdad Pact battle on and throughout the rest of his political career. By 1963, Egypt was broadcasting a total of 755 hours a week in 24 languages. The number jumped by 1970 to 34 languages and transmission hours were only surpassed worldwide by four countries: The United States, the Soviet Union, Great Britain and West Germany[43].

Sadat adopted what he called the "electric shock diplomacy"; sudden, unexpected and frequently controversial decisions aimed at bringing about a breakthrough in the regional environment. The unthinkable decision to visit the Israeli foe in November 1977 to break the no peace/no war stalemate is a glaring case in point. The way he substituted Egypt's superpower affiliations following the October war confirms the same attitude.

The diversity in the substance and orientation of their policies notwithstanding, Nasser and Sadat had something in common; they both used to take foreign policy initiatives or, to use Korany's expression, were "foreign policy movers"[44]. Nasser's decision to break the Western monopoly on arms transfers, nationalize the Suez Canal Company, and unite with Syria and Sadat's October war decision as well as his Mideast peace initiative confirm that. In many cases, moreover, these initiatives involved a no small measure of risk-taking. For instance, Nasser's daring position in 1956 and 1967 exposed him to two military campaigns, the second of which cost him the Sinai Peninsula. Likewise, Sadat's policies in the second half of the seventies entailed a dramatic break with the Arab world. More importantly, they eventually cost him his life[45]. Mubarak, on the other hand, never embarked on serious ventures and was on the whole an advocate of the politics of the status quo.

Centralization and personalization of foreign policy decisions continued to be the norm under Nasser, Sadat and Mubarak. The involvement of other institutions was confined to gathering information and advice in the pre-decision stage and implementation of the decision in the post-decision stage[46]. In the first period of Nasser's rule (1952-55), the revolutionary council had a role - albeit minor - in formulating policies, but "Nasser's personality remained dominant and often the council allowed him to have his own way even though Nasser's views were contrary to the opinion of the majority"[47]. The input of other institutions, including the Foreign Ministry, was limited. According to Wilton Wynn, Nasser's Foreign Minister, Mahmoud Fawzi:

"had little to do with policy. He was an aide rather than an adviser to Nasser. But when Nasser decided on a policy in international affairs, Fawzi implemented it with admirable skill. As someone has said, "Nasser acts and Fawzi makes it legal""[48].

Sadat was the engineer of the radical foreign policy change of the 1970s. Foreign policy centralization continued under Sadat and other institutions were often kept in the dark about his intentions.[49] Only two people, for instance, were informed in advance of his decision to expel the Soviet advisors in 1972 and only one knew about his decision to visit Jerusalem[50]. The centralization of decision-making and marginalization of other parties created at times tension with other institutions. For example, three ministers from the diplomatic institution resigned in protest of the bypassing of their opinions: Foreign Minister Ismael Fahmy and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Mohamed Riad on the eve of his momentous decision to visit Jerusalem and Foreign Minister Mohamed Ibrahim Kamel a few hours before the signing of the Camp David Accords.

Certainly, both Nasser and Sadat were pragmatists, but each of a different type. Sadat, "a realist with little attachment to grand theories and ideologies",[51] was different from Nasser who - still a realist - invested much of his time and energy in an ideology that he envisaged could serve his objectives, especially dominance of the Arab world. Yet, he did not, on the whole, allow his ideological beliefs to restrict his freedom of action[52]. According to Professor Majid Khadduri, although he was "ideologically committed to certain overriding objectives, he was not a utopian reformer for whom one simple solution would make everything come out right"[53]. His pragmatism notwithstanding, the ideology he preached was so successful that it turned in the last part of his career from an instrument to a constraint as Nasser had to live up

to the expectations of Arab masses that looked up to him as the hero of the Arab world[54]. The impulsive way he managed the 1967 crisis attests to such an attitude. Sadat had no ideology to preach. He was blunt about the primacy of interests - and only interests - in the formulation of foreign policy.

Nasser and Sadat: The Impact of Personality

In highly centralized systems where political institutionalization is considerably low, the personality of the leader and his world views leave their print on the way foreign policy is conducted. In Egypt, concurs Fouad Ajami, "(s)ome of the drama can be understood by focusing on the two "kings"(i.e. Nasser and Sadat)"[55]. In his outstanding book on Egypt's foreign policy under Nasser, eminent scholar Adeed Dawisha identifies three personal traits that accounted for much of Nasser's political behavior. First, Nasser was a firm believer "in the 'great man theory'; the individualist who leads men into deeds that rewrite history"[56]. This belief explains the "ultra-centralisation of Nasser's political structure and his seeming unwillingness, even inability, to delegate power or transfer authority to a grass-root political organization"[57]. Also, Nasser's quest of change and concern about leadership came as a consequence of this belief.

Second, 'dignity' held a special place in Nasser's mind. The humiliation inflicted by the British occupation on Nasser and his countrymen could not be easily erased from his memory. When asked about the greatest of his achievements, he replied: "the restoration of our self-confidence and sense of dignity as a people"[58]. Hence, independence became a cornerstone of Nasser's foreign policy, and domination of both the US and the Soviet Union was rejected.

Nasser's extreme sensitivity and his inclination to go on confrontations if he felt his - or Egypt's - pride is hurt[59] often caused problems. For instance, an unnecessary diplomatic crisis erupted with the United States in 1964 as a result of Nasser's hot temper. On the 21st of December, the Minister of Supplies Ramzy Kamal Estino had a meeting with the American ambassador in which the latter declined to discuss Egyptian demands of wheat because of the downing of a small commercial American jet by an Egyptian fighter the day before. The ambassador believed the time was not favorable to discussing such demands as they would most probably be rejected on the spot in Washington and proposed postponing the

negotiations till the storm calms down. Nasser, who was misinformed about this meeting, got mad and used the opportunity of his annual speech in Port Said to launch an attack against the Americans:

"The American Ambassador said that he could not discuss this topic now. And why? Because they do not like our conduct in Egypt. I say whoever does not like our conduct can drink from the sea and if the Mediterranean is not enough, they can drink the Red Sea as well. We do not sell our independence for thirty, forty or fifty million pounds of wheat"[60]

Third, his courage and over-confidence in his skills made him take up extremely risky ventures[61]. The decision to nationalize the Suez Canal Company and thereby risk an uneven confrontation with great powers is a case in point.

Likewise, Sadat's eccentric personality had an impact on the way he ran Egypt's foreign relations. Ajami, for example, wondered how "a self-defined peasant from the dusty small village Mit Abu al-Qom….had become more comfortable with American television reporters and French visitors than with former colleagues and friends"[62]. On his part, Heikal argued that Sadat developed an inferiority complex due to his dark skin color[63]. No concrete evidence proves such a harsh accusation, yet some accounts (e.g. Foreign Minister Mohamed Ibrahim Kamel's in *The Lost Peace in Camp David Accords*) refer to Sadat's constant quest for appreciation and his yearning for praise[64]. This trait made him vulnerable and affected the essence and timing of some of his decisions. For example, some of his 'electric-shock diplomacy' could be attributed to his constant need to remain the center of attention. It is not an exaggeration to argue that Sadat had got increasingly hostage to the camera in his last few years in office.

In the same vein, Kamel argued that Sadat persistently sought glory; he constantly imagined himself as a great historic figure like Omar Ibn al-Khattab, Saladin, or Richard the Lionheart. At other moments, he saw himself as the "hero of war" or "the prophet of peace" or, even, just a simple humble peasant. A common joke portrayed Sadat as saying after being informed that a huge fire erupted but was soon contained: "What a pity. It was a great chance to wear the uniform of the Supreme Commander of the Fire-Brigade"[65].

Furthermore, Sadat had a deep belief that luck would never forsake him. Kamel attributed that conviction to the many obstacles Sadat had faced throughout his life yet was always able to defeat. Born in a poor and backward village from a humble background, he

managed through joining the military junta that toppled the monarchy to climb the social ladder then, surprisingly, he endured the many purges that fellow revolutionary council members stumbled upon and became Nasser's Vice President and then Egypt's President in less than a year. The first few years of his sway intensified this feeling, for he easily defeated his political rivals at home, effortlessly expelled the Soviet military advisors and his army crossed the fortified Barlev Line in a few hours[66]. Indeed, the path, in the words of Fouad Ajami, "from Mit Abu al-Qom to the Nobel Peace Prize; from a lower-middle-class agrarian base in the Nile delta to the world as his theater" was truly long, but it had an unforeseen happy ending[67]. Accordingly, Sadat was always optimistic, and his estimations were frequently at odds with what facts on the ground suggested and with the advice of aides and experts. The distinguished journalist Ahmed Bahaa El-Din backed this argument with additional evidence. In *Dialogues with Sadat*, he wrote that Sadat sincerely believed that Israel would give up all Arab territories subjugated in the 1967 war, including the Golan Heights and the Gaza Strip[68]. Also, Sadat - on his way to the city of Ismailia for official talks with the Israeli Premier - told Bahaa El-Din assertively that he would only hold two negotiating sessions with the Israelis and run thereafter an international press conference to publicize the main principles of the agreement[69].

In addition, Sadat is notorious for his modest intellectual background[70]. He used to simplify complicated economic matters and draw funny comparisons between unrelated issues, says Bahaa El-Din[71]. His limited knowledge of the basics rules of politics and law, maintains Kamel, impeded him from negotiating successfully with the Israelis and Americans[72]. His disinterest in reading official memorandums and documents[73] provides a reasonable explanation for this defect. Interestingly, Heikal notes that even though countless pictures were taken of Sadat (a big fan of the camera), none showed him sitting at his desk or reading a book[74]. In fact, much of the information he acquired was, ironically, drawn from American movies and he often referred to that in public speeches and press conferences[75].

II The Presidency

1- Hosni Mubarak

Hosni Mubarak was born on May 4, 1928 in the village of Kafr Musayliha (province of Minufiya), Northern Egypt. He joined the Military Academy in 1947, where he earned a

degree in military sciences. In 1950, he joined the Air Force Academy to receive a degree in aviation sciences. Since then, he assumed several positions in the Air Force: pilot, instructor, squadron leader and base commander. In the 1960s, he received training in the Soviet Union and was appointed Air Force Academy Commander in 1969. In 1972, he became Commander of Air Force and Deputy Minister of Defense. He took part in the planning (and executing) of the military offense waged by Egypt and Syria against Israel in October 1973. He was appointed Vice-President in April 1975 and remained in that position till 1981. He became Vice-President of the ruling National Democratic Party (NDP) in 1978. Upon Sadat's assassination by Islamic fundamentalists on the 6th of October 1981, Mubarak was nominated for the presidency by the People's Assembly and a referendum was held on October 13. The following day, Mubarak was proclaimed President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, a position he keeps till today. Mubarak is, therefore, the longest serving Egyptian ruler since Mohamed Ali Pasha (ruled 1805-1848).[76]

The general who had spent his entire life in the armed forces was faced after assuming the presidency with a huge challenge, for the legacy Mubarak inherited was heavy: an exploding population, a stark deficiency in public services, the inefficiency of the bureaucracy, the seeds of a threatening sectarian strife, isolation in the Arab world and dependency on the United States in addition to a seemingly irretrievable decline in economic conditions. Indeed, "the task of keeping the place afloat and intact [was] like plowing the sea."[77] Therefore, feelings of appreciation and sympathy characterized at first the standpoint of people (and scholars) toward him. Ajami wrote:

"To rule Egypt is to rule against the background of these expectations and disappointments. Pity the air force officer who now presides over a country groaning under the weight of its numbers, scrambling to pay for its food imports, reconciling its claims to greatness with the fact of its dependence on American power and largess."[78]

Likewise, Vatikiotis wrote:

"One can…appreciate the enormous task facing President Mubarak, or any other ruler of Egypt for that matter, who has the daunting prospect of taking the country into the twenty-first century plagued by such a legacy, and threatened by diminishing resources, especially of water and food."[79]

Mubarak, himself, complained about the huge responsibilities associated with the presidency and somewhat lamented for the days he spent in the military:

"The most burdensome thing that can happen to you in a developing country is that you get to be the president…the military with all its responsibilities is in actuality more pleasurable. There is no comparison."[80]

Mubarak exhibited substantial moderation in his first years in office. He released the political prisoners who were arrested in the September 1981 frenzied wave of arrests, allowed a wider margin of freedom of expression and aimed at achieving some sort of balance in Egypt's foreign relations. This was positively perceived by his people who "were ready to let him try his solution as an antidote to the last frantic years of Sadat."[81] After all, having lived through the troubled years of Nasser's revolution and battles and Sadat's experimentalism and 'electric shocks', they yearned for "a more "normal" leadership."[82]

Mubarak also created an aura of righteousness by bringing some corrupt individuals to trial, including Anwar Sadat's brother, Esmat. He was therefore perceived as a clean leader who was determined to fight corruption and bribery. Moreover, Mubarak was keen to keep his family out of the limelight Sadat's family (particularly his wife Jihan) had grown addicted to. Upon a visit to the American University in Cairo, Mubarak's wife (Susan Thabet) passed almost without recognition. In a way, this standpoint was a calculated reaction to his predecessor's excesses. In another, it reflects personal choices; Mubarak's reaction to the public's interest in his private life seems to be: "it's none of your business".[83]

His discreet personality notwithstanding, with the passage of time some of Mubarak's key personal traits came to be known to scholars and political commentators. I will discuss six of these traits below (cautiousness, obsession with security, stubbornness, lack of strategic vision, pragmatism, and lack of charisma) and explain how they colored his political style and influenced the decision-making process.

1- Cautiousness

"Mubarak has not committed any major mistakes in foreign policy".[84]

Mustafa Al-Fiky, Diplomat

"The bitter joke is: 'Mubarak hasn't done anything wrong. But then again he hasn't done anything'"

The single most vivid trait in Mubarak's character is cautiousness. He is described as "a cautious man"[85], in fact "ultra-cautious"[86], who is "static"[87], "considerably conservative"[88], "calm, quiet"[89], "possesses (compared to his predecessor) a more reserved and less outgoing personality"[90] and follows a "nonconfrontational style in pursuing his foreign policy objectives"[91]. He described his method in decision-making by saying: "I am used to maintain my calmness in decision-making so that decisions come out well-studied and accurate, for the most dangerous thing a political leadership can do is to shock people every now and then with unstudied decisions."[92] Even though Mubarak never made a direct reference to Nasser's confrontationist style or Sadat's 'electric-shock diplomacy', the aforementioned statement, clearly, comprises a subtle criticism of the style of both. On another occasion, he said: "I do not like to take decisions under pressure unless there are strong motivations for doing so. My way is to take my time on any decision I take."[93] He defended what his critics saw as sluggishness in making decisions: "slowness (in decision-making) so that the decision is well-studied and successful is a million times better than taking dozens of unplanned decisions then annulling them after proved wrong."[94] To Mubarak, decisions taken in haste are tantamount to half-baked food, so enjoying a better meal requires patience and persistence.[95] Even after consultation and study are fulfilled to the point of exhaustion, Mubarak prefers to test the decision on a small scale, like a governorate or a district within one city, before an all-out implementation scheme is approved.[96]

Proponents of the regime regarded his cautiousness as one of his good qualities as a statesman. For instance, Atef Sidqy (Prime Minister from 1986 to 1996) said: "President Mubarak's principle is not to judge things in haste. Studying (the decision) should come first before taking the decision especially if it is related to a crucial issue."[97] Likewise, his advisor Mustafa Al-Fiky argued that Mubarak maintains a "unique" relationship with time; "He is not a pushy person and he doesn't like to take decisions quickly…He takes his time, reacting at the proper time and he is not reactionary."[98]

However, Mubarak's initially welcomed cautiousness led to indecisiveness and hesitancy when it comes to policy-making. His very first words after becoming president were that he would not make a promise he could not fulfill, "an admirable aim for a politician, but

one which could be an excuse for inaction."[99] Indeed, to friends and opponents alike, Mubarak seemed over time to be *'too cautious to be good'*, or, even more an "inactive, lethargic leader."[100] For example, the decision to reestablish diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union took three whole years.[101] According to Cantori, "there has come to be an awareness that he is a leader who reacts rather than proacts". Many, therefore, "urge him…to exhibit more decisiveness. But he is very circumscribed in his field of action"[102]. For instance, the prominent economic thinker Galal Amin maintained that Egypt's tragedy lies in the fact that the 'Egyptian boat' has quit sailing; it hoisted the sails and stayed on seashore.[103] The political sociologist Saad Eddin Ibrahim used quite a similar analogy: Egypt's role is either absent or it jumps into a train that had already departed.[104]

As a result of his ultra-cautious nature, Mubarak neither exhibited interest in leadership nor pursued greatness and prominence. He is a simple man whose fate brought him to the presidency, or, more accurately, brought the presidency to him on a silver plate[105]. He is essentially "an ordinary man with no claims to greatness."[106], "a lackluster president"[107] or just a "civil servant with the rank of president"[108]. Contrary to Nasser's great achievements (e.g. nationalizing the Suez Canal company, building the High Dam in Aswan, introducing agrarian reforms) and Sadat's eye-catching adventures and theatrical performances (war and peace with Israel), Mubarak has none, nor seemed to be interested in any as a matter of fact. He "does not gamble or take risks, personal or national…If Mubarak had ruled Egypt instead of Sadat in the late 1970s, he would not have had the daring to sign a peace treaty with Israel against the consensus of the Arab world."[109] Amer in 1984 wrote that Mubarak's Bandung or Crossing "are no where on the horizon."[110] More than twenty years later, the prophecy remains true. Hence, Hopwood said that among the Egyptian people the "bitter joke is: 'Mubarak hasn't done anything wrong. But then again he hasn't done anything'"[111]. Therefore, Nasser and Sadat, both "foreign policy movers" in the words of Bahgat Korany[112], are blamed for the things they did, but Mubarak, ironically, is blamed for the things he never did.

A number of analysts argued that backing the United States in its 1991 war on Iraq was a bold decision, but a number of factors show that Mubarak had no alternative but to do take that course. Opposing the US military campaign would have cost Egypt much, particularly economically at a time when its economy was severely suffering. In addition,

Saddam's irrational move, had it been stabilized, would have left its marks on inter-Arab relations. The Egyptian leadership thought that a return to the 'Arab Cold War', that threatened the domestic stability of Arab states, must be avoided. Furthermore, even though Egypt relinquished its leading role in the Arab world, it did not approve the efforts of other Arab states to take on the mantle of leadership, for it believed this would inevitably come at the expense of Egypt's national interests. In fact, in the immediate aftermath of the invasion, an internal report issued by the President's office in collaboration with the Foreign Ministry and the Intelligence considered Iraq's step to be detrimental to Egypt's interests, since it sandwiches Egypt between its commitment towards the Arab Cooperation Council (which integrates both Egypt and Iraq) and the GCC rich states who could provide financial help to Egypt.[113]

Some political analysts (e.g. Zahran 1993) argued that Mubarak's cautious style in policy-making stems principally from his professional background as an army officer, but this is a flawed view. Mubarak's predecessors came from the ranks of the military too. Still, Nasser was an adventurous leader who thrived on gambling and risk-taking and Sadat's diplomacy was basically premised on 'electric-shocks', which Mubarak publicly announced he does not like.[114] It would be more reasonable, however, to remember that Mubarak was not a fighter pilot, but operated a bomber jet. The bomber does not engage with the aircrafts of the enemy, but bombs the enemy's positions from high altitudes and then returns safely with his plane. In the army and in politics, one can argue, Mubarak is a bomber, not a fighter.[115]

2- Obsession with Security

"We are at the beginning of the twenty first century, and we unfortunately have no imagination, to the extent that we are afraid of any change, because we consider it an adventure, which made us afraid even from ourselves.
We are entering the twenty first century without weapons. Others do the opposite."[116]
Mohamed Hassanein Heikal, journalist

Another crucial feature of Hosni Mubarak is his deep obsession with personal and regime security, something that is related anyhow to his cautious nature. According to Sprinborg, "his…passion for security is obtrusive, possibly obsessive, and further contributes

to his isolation from the public."[117] Hala Mustafa, scholar at the Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies and editor-in-chief of the monthly *Democracy*, agrees: "Mubarak is an extremely cautious man. He is obsessed with stability."[118] An American diplomat who had worked with Mubarak extensively – Dennis Ross[119] – confirms it: "stability in Egypt", he says, is "always the preoccupation of President Hosni Mubarak"[120]. Mubarak's excessive concern about security is clearly reflected in his public discourse; "Mubarak's watchword is stability. The word features in every speech he gives".[121]

Obviously, after the assassination of Sadat (in a military parade that Mubarak witnessed) fear of assassination grew phenomenally. In addition, talk of infiltration of the army by Islamists was ubiquitous. Hence, the loyalty of the military "remained a primary concern and was a major preoccupation of Sadat's successor."[122] Accordingly, huge transfers, retirement schemes and plain dismissals that "amounted to a purge of the officer corps"[123] were undertaken in response to the perceived threat. Up till this day, the loyalty of the armed forces tops the list of presidential concerns and no measure to assure its continuity is spared.

The anxiety over potential assassination attempts or coups did not subside, however, after Mubarak's rule was consolidated, for the short truce following the murder of Sadat was soon interrupted by two major events that sent shivers through the state. The first was the rebellion of the Central Security Forces in early 1986. Reminiscent of the violent bread riots of 1977, the insurrection was serious, wide-ranging and required the intervention of the army.

The second, and more serious, development was the growth of Islamic fundamentalism and the vicious war Islamic militants waged against the state and its senior officials resulting in the death of over 1,200 people in the period between 1992 and 1996. The death toll of political violence increased from 139 in 1991 and 1992, to 207 and 225 in 1993 and 1994 respectively.[124] Senior government officials were also high on the list of assailants. In one year alone (1994), three assassination attempts took place against top state officials: Prime Minister Atef Sidqy, Minister of Interior Mohamed Hassan Al-Alfy and Minister of Information Safwat Al-Sharif. The assault represented the fiercest threat facing the post-1952 Egyptian regime thus leading many to contemplate the chances of the regime staying in power. According to *The Sunday Times* of London, a group of US intelligence experts considered Mubarak's regime to be "in grave danger of being overthrown by Islamic fundamentalists, with catastrophic consequences for Western interests in the Middle East."[125]

The report concluded that "Mubarak is likely to fall and his country slide into economic chaos and civil war if present trends continue."[126] Even after the Egyptian regime managed to prevail in its war against domestic rivals, a political analyst at *The Guardian* remained pessimistic about the ability of Mubarak (along with the monarchs of Saudi Arabia and Jordan and Yasser Arafat's PLO) to withstand the pressures of Islamic movements. "It is likely that endemic problems and the Islamic fundamentalist tide gripping their countries will bring an end to their regimes within the next five years"[127], he wrote.

The state reacted brutally to the security challenge: thousands of Islamists were arrested, dozens of death sentences were decreed by military courts[128], and the state of emergency was periodically extended. So in the same year (1994), an average of fifty people was arrested on a daily basis, five people killed daily[129] and three insurgents hanged monthly.[130]

Two assassination attempts in Addis Ababa (1995) and Port Said (1999)[131] in addition to a number of unannounced endeavors[132] heightened Mubarak's feelings of insecurity and gave his security aides unwarranted leverage in the decision-making process. In the words of former US Assistant Secretary of State Robert Pelletreau, "the perceived risk of assassination has made him understandably more inclined to give the benefit of the doubt to his security advisers"[133]. In fact, the advice of security agencies has over time become one of the major factors to be considered before any decision is taken, if not – in some cases – the single aspect considered. Aziz Sidqy (Egypt's Prime Minister from January 1972 to March 1973) contended that no voice reaches the political leadership now but the voice of the security apparatus and that this is bound to lead the country to a catastrophe.[134] For example, Mubarak has refrained by and large from visiting African capitals (where security measures are usually lax and incompetent) ever since the failed attempt on his life in Addis Ababa, in part because of his exaggerated concerns of his own security and in another because of the significant weight of the recommendations of security agencies.[135]

Mubarak's security concerns colored his domestic and foreign policies. On the regional level, Egypt is a status-quo power with a great interest in preserving stability and order. Mediating to solve the Saudi-Qatari border dispute in 1993 and the Turkish-Syrian face-off in 2000 in addition, of course, to the relentless efforts to bring Israelis and Palestinians to the negotiating table whenever crises threaten to undercut the peace process

verify Egypt's concern over regional stability. One shall note here that the package of regional policies it pursues and the notions its foreign policy advocates are not taken in isolation from what the political leadership sees as the requirements of the domestic setting, namely sustaining political stability and realizing economic development. Said differently, the "goal of regional stability is motivated primarily by domestic factors."[136]

Domestically, the regime kept an eye on any event or development that might spark wide-ranging public protests, be it an increase in the prices of basic goods, the publishing of a blasphemous book or tough-handed Israeli measures against Palestinians in the occupied territories. Accordingly, it "position(ed) itself so as not to allow any public outcry to gather momentum or turn into an anti-government protest."[137] In the 1980s, for example, Mubarak sacked a prime minister whom he considered was going too far in accepting the demands of the IMF, fearing that increases in the prices of basic necessities would trigger extensive public protests.[138] In many cases, stability was sought at any price, even at the expense of stagnation of Egyptian politics and society. In the face of pressures, explains Heikal, "a strategy developed where compromises and further deferment were often the chosen solutions."[139] Also, the economic liberalization program, started in the late 1980s, was embraced half-heartedly for fears of popular backlash. Therefore, painstaking negotiations with the IMF were conducted to convince the international organizations to approve 'the Egyptian way of reform', namely a step-by-step approach, or what came to be known as "reform in doses". In short, gradualism became the key word of economic liberalization.

In the domestic political realm, no motion was witnessed, not even in a gradual fashion; the dominance of the ruling party was guaranteed, the isolation of opposition parties maintained and dissent strictly scrutinized and controlled. As early as 1986, a prominent scholar - Hamied Ansari - explained how Egypt has become a "stalled society"[140]. Three years later, another outstanding scholar - Robert Springborg - warned that Mubarak's regime is "fragmenting"[141]. The rules of the political game were well-maintained through the beginnings of the new millennium, though. By 2005, a desperate opposition leader asserted that "Egypt's politics are stagnant, and that's why the country is in so much trouble"[142], a Western scholar lamented that the "stagnation of Egypt is a tragedy for a great country"[143] and an Egyptian academic contended that the Egyptian political system "has ossified"[144].

Compared to Nasser and Sadat who had changed – and amended – the Egyptian constitution several times, Mubarak's long tenure witnessed the amendment of just one article of the constitution written back in 1971 (article 76 amended in 2005). Moreover, whereas the state's political organization was changed three times under Nasser (from the Liberation Agency to the National Union and then to the Arab Socialist Union (ASU)) and twice under Sadat (from the ASU to Egypt's Party and then to the National Democratic Party), Mubarak kept the National Democratic Party he had inherited from his predecessor. Mubarak, furthermore, is keen not to request cabinet reshuffles or remove key ministers from their positions very often. Hence, many of his ministers spent in office more than fifteen or twenty years. Mubarak, in short, is a status quo-oriented man; he intrinsically hates change.[145] According to Samer Soliman's profound study on the management of the fiscal crisis and its relation to political change under Mubarak, avoiding change reflects a strategy of survival; for institutional changes, in essence, mean that the rules governing the relationship between different people, groups and organizations in the society will be altered. This will, accordingly, mobilize people; either to approve the proposed changes or resist them, something the regime desperately wants to avoid. So in order to survive, the regime strives to bar different political and social groups from political participation. In short, institutional stagnation is preferred to change that could pave the way for dissent and loss of control.[146]

The previous discussion shows that Mubarak's high sense of insecurity reacted, in part, to a context full of challenges and constraints, but that is not sufficient to explain his behavior, which was partially dependent on the his choices as well. One should not forget that Nasser, too, worked in an environment that was full of constraints, but he reacted differently. Nasser *engaged* them, while Mubarak *escaped* them. It makes more sense, therefore, to think that Mubarak's attitude was the result of a harsh reality, but was, likewise, aggravated by his extremely cautious nature.

The patterns of public expenditure and resource distribution among different sectors and ministries are a good indicator of the fundamental philosophy underlying Mubarak's political priorities, which basically is: security of the regime comes first, then all of the rest. In the 1990s, international and government statistics showed a stark increase in the budget allocated to the ministries of Interior, Religious Endowments, Information and Culture. These sectors, explains Samer Soliman, were favored because of the crucial function they fulfill:

they contribute to the survival of the regime, directly or indirectly. On the other hand, public education - believed to be the engine of economic growth as the case of the Asian tigers clearly demonstrated - was left in shambles, simply because education is not a factor in the calculations of regime security.

Obviously, the Ministry of Interior played a key role in preserving order and securing the regime against the fierce campaign waged by Islamic underground groups who strove to topple the regime and institute an Islamic state in its place. Accordingly, the size of the ministry has grown significantly; its personnel rose from 150 thousand in 1974 to more than one million in 2002 (i.e. from 9% to 21% of the total size of state employees). Moreover, a green light was given to security agencies to root out radical Islamists and a blind eye was turned to any human rights' abuses involved.[147] In parallel with the tough-handed security measures employed by the Ministry of Interior, the state vigorously tried to bar Islamists from winning the hearts and minds of people in an attempt to stop their successful campaign of conscripting youngsters. This, the regime concluded, would not succeed without the efforts of the Ministry of Religious Endowments, which would control local mosques (a classical hotbed of radicals), discredit the Islamists' allegations and promote a moderate and peace-oriented version of Islam. In a country where nearly half of the population is still illiterate, the media, in particular the state-owned television, had to be harnessed to face the challenge of Islamists as well. The state thus increased the number of television channels from two in 1981 to eight by the early 1990s. It also financed the publication of scores of books and newspapers that promoted secular ideas, and defied the concept of the 'Islamic state'. The huge project of '*Maktabat Al-Usra'* (The Family's Library), sponsored by Mrs. Mubarak, which subsidized the publishing and distributing of thousands of books, is a vivid case in point.

On the other hand, the public consensus that called for directing more state investments into the sector of education was neglected by the regime. By the early 1990s, in particular after many schools were destroyed by the deadly earthquake of October 1992, an awareness that public education is in a deep crisis and hence in dire need of investments, has evolved; experts noted that education was a prime factor in the economic miracle Asian tigers had realized, businessmen complained about the low quality of the Egyptian workforce and even state officials, including President Mubarak, frequently admitted that developing education is inevitable for a successful process of economic development. Yet, the regime did

not sincerely seek the upgrading of the educational system and preferred maintaining the substandard status quo. That is, Soliman explains, because improving the quality of education would require raising the wages of some one million public school teachers by diverting funds from more important sectors, like the ministries of Defense, Interior and Information, something a regime that is obsessed with its security - at the expense of anything else - would never do. In short, developing education in Egypt was sacrificed on the altar of the regime's obsession with its security.[148]

Furthermore, the large discrepancy in the income of state employees between those working in bodies essential for maintaining stability and security, like the security apparatus, the judiciary and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on one hand and other sectors that do not contribute to state security can not be explained but by the 'security logic'. The former are, in the language of the Egyptian bureaucracy, called 'the private cadre', hence their salaries are determined by special laws and regulations to ensure the continuation of their loyalty.[149]

The repeated demands for change and political reform fell on deaf ears for Mubarak, in the words of a member of the NDP, "understands stability as maintaining the status quo"[150]. Often did he refer in interviews and speeches to the turbulent last sixth months of King Farouk's rule, when the fall of three successive cabinets spread anarchy and contributed to the success of the Free Officer's coup in July, a scenario he definitely does not want to repeat. "If we open the door completely before the people, there will be chaos"[151], he once said. His advisors, correspondingly, advocate endurance and a gradual introduction of reforms. For example, Gamal Mubarak who is widely thought to be the architect of the NDP's cosmetic reform plans warned that: "If we introduce lots of changes in a short period of time, the people could not digest them."[152] In short, president Mubarak, says Robert Pelletreau "doesn't take risks"[153].

Inevitably, stagnation prevailed. An Egyptian academic grieved over the inertness of Egypt's political life under Mubarak:

"Everything in Egypt is for life; there is no rise or fall here. Mubarak recognizes his limits. There is no grand idea that would land him in trouble…he has learned the art of staying in power, avoiding troubles. Under him, Egypt will neither democratize nor privatize. It will avoid grand choices. The forces in the country will be played off against one another; the mastery of the state will continue."[154]

3- Stubbornness

One of Mubarak's major personal characteristics is stubbornness and inflexibility. It is well-reflected in his policies in two main ways. First, his disinclination to change or amend decisions he had already taken, even if visible developments on the ground make such changes vital. In an interview with *Al-Ahram*, he said: "I do not like to take a decision and then change it in two months to issue another one."[155] He also said: "I do not like to abolish a decision I took."[156]

The second indicator is his tendency to withstand the pressure staged by internal political forces (political parties, professional syndicates, labor unions…etc), no matter how rational and necessary their demands are. In the second half of the 1980s, for instance, the whole Egyptian society from right to left was mobilized against Mubarak's tough-handed Minister of Interior, General Zaki Badr. The latter's inappropriate public conduct aggravated the conservative Egyptian society and recurrent calls to dismiss him were made, to whom Mubarak turned a deaf ear. Some analysts argued that in this case (and many others), Mubarak aimed at sending a clear message to all political forces saying that he is the actual decision-maker, and not anybody else. The words of Mubarak's political advisor Osama Al-Baz confirm such an analysis:

"Sometimes, some people in political parties or professional guilds have the illusion that they can influence the decision-making process and general policies by exerting effort in an attempt to pressure the regime, the government and the president to achieve a certain end….the president does not get carried away by internal pressure and does not allow his government to yield to internal pressure."[157]

To Mubarak, giving in to domestic forces would only lead to further concessions, a process which would ultimately loosen his grip on power. With outside powers (e.g. the United States), concessions could be made, so long as they are related to regional issues and do not threaten the regime's authority at home.

4- Lack of Strategic Vision

In his early days, Nasser had a vision (albeit immature and incomplete) about the remedy of Egypt's crisis, namely the evacuation of British troops and the rise of an

independent Egyptian state. Specific means to make this happen and concrete steps to take after the withdrawal materializes had not shaped up in his mind yet. After a few years in power, however, a clearer vision of what means could be used to achieve what kind of goals crystallized in his mind. The outcome was Nasser's Egypt, a pioneer attempt to attain internal and external independence and an ambitious development program, accompanied by an ideological and moral guide: socialism and pan-Arabism.

Sadat too had a vision of his own. He devoted his career to putting in place the heavy legacy he had inherited by regaining the occupied Sinai territories, and he did relatively well in war and peace. But this is not only what Sadat had opted for. He strove to transform Egypt's character and international linkages towards the West. In a way, he revived Khedive Ismail's dream of modernizing Egypt, of making it a part of Europe. The way out of Egypt's pressing economic problems, he thought, lies in the attraction of foreign investment and modern technology. Whether Sadat was right or wrong, one can not deny that he had some kind of an idea of how to steer Egypt's course into the future. As Essam Al-Irian, a leader of the Muslim Brotherhood movement, said: "He was a man with a vision…He was right at times and wrong at times, but he definitely had a vision."[158]

In *Power and Leadership in International Bargaining*, Shibley Telhami explains the difference between politicians when it comes to the level of focus:

"Some leaders tend to focus on the highest levels of analysis, on broad relations and general categories (the forest), ignoring the details (the trees) within. Others tend to focus on details without being fully aware of the broader situation. Still others seem able to move comfortably from one level to the next as the situation demands."[159]

Telhami's study of the Camp David negotiations demonstrated that "Sadat's level of focus was clearly high ("forest") level."[160] Sadat was neither interested in, nor attentive to, details[161], a terrible disadvantage in a negotiating context, but not an all-bad trait for a politician. What he said in his first meeting with Secretary of State Henry Kissinger on the 7th of November, 1973 sheds light on this. When Kissinger started talking by referring to the imperative issue of returning the armies of Egypt and Israel to the positions of the 22nd of October, Sadat interrupted him:

"Henry, don't waste your time now in these details. I expect from you what's more important than that. You are a strategic man, and so am I, so let us not get stuck at these minor issues."[162]

So what about Hosni Mubarak's political vision? In fact, he has none. Mubarak is an army officer who spent his whole life in the armed forces. Contrary to Nasser and Sadat, he never exhibited any interest in politics or any inclination to political activism. He was twenty-four in 1952, but was not a member of the one hundred and fifty 'Free Officers' that overthrew the monarchy in July. Under Nasser, he was not affiliated with the officers who constituted the clientele of Field Marshal Abdel-Hakim Amer, Nasser's Defense Minister and the regime's strong man. Instead, he was "principally a military officer accustomed to routine imposed by bureaucracy and chain of command."[163]

After becoming president, Mubarak did not prove that he has any clear or comprehensible vision of the way out of Egypt's domestic economic and political malaises thus "giving the impression that he is still groping for a direction."[164] In foreign policy, too, Mubarak did not demonstrate over twenty-five years of leadership that he has any grand vision of how to effectively - and creatively - run Egypt's foreign relations in a changing regional and international environment. So by the beginning of the twenty-first century, a political analyst convincingly concluded that "Egypt is not likely to develop either a grand, encompassing strategy or a regional blueprint for action…Rather, Egypt will develop policies to deal with specific issues and problems as they arise."[165]

Mubarak's conception of Egypt's foreign policy role is limited to its capacity to promote peace and stability in the Middle East. This includes, first and foremost, acting as a peace broker between Arabs and Israelis. Until 1994, Egypt was the only Arab country that enjoyed full diplomatic relations with Israel, hence the only Arab party capable of mediating between the different parties of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Even after Jordan normalized its relations with Israel, Egypt continued to play this role with vigor and enthusiasm. "Peace is the strategic choice of Egypt and Arabs" Mubarak frequently said. He also stated that:

"We are, as a matter of fact, exerting all our effort for the sake of this goal (achieving peace). Peace is always our first priority in our communication with Arab brothers, friendly states and international powers. That is because peace is the only path to the solution of all major problems."[166]

Hence, Sharm El-Sheikh became the principal venue for Mideast peace negotiations. Egypt's efforts on this front emphasized its indispensability to the US, and asserted its central position in the Arab world. Mubarak said:

"We are helping as much as we can [in the peace process} because our position and Egypt's status in the region are basic and pivotal…We cannot abandon our role because this constantly highlights Egypt's importance."[167]

Mubarak also sought to play a stabilizing role with regards to the region's political and border disputes. Mubarak's efforts helped release much of the tension between Saudi Arabia and Qatar in 1993, and Turkey and Syria in 2000. He had also mediated between Iraq and Kuwait in the summer of 1990, and had, in fact, obtained a pledge from the Iraqi President not to use force, a promise that was later shattered by Saddam Hussein.

The role of the peace broker required credibility, something Mubarak highlighted many times. He affirmed that "Egypt cannot lose its credibility before the entire world and thus lose the ability to mediate with any world country in connection with any issue."[168]

However, these efforts did not evolve into a comprehensive strategy, capable of projecting Egyptian power effectively at all times. In fact, capitalizing on peace (and peace only) exposed the fragile Egyptian influence at times of crisis and violence which are plenty in the Middle East (e.g. during Palestinian-Israeli confrontations, the US war on Iraq, Israel's war on Lebanon, etc). Furthermore, Egypt's association with the Americans barred her from leading the Arab world for two main reasons: it lost credibility in the eyes of Arabs, and it was exposed to the influence of Americans, who were keen to prevent the rise of another Nasser.

By virtue of six years spent as Vice-President, Mubarak's experience was primarily bureaucratic, not political. He learnt the rules of the Egyptian state, knowing therefore how to balance between the different groups of the Egyptian bureaucracy, how to win the loyalty of people and allegiance of institutions and, most importantly, how to survive in power. Needless to say, this does not require wisdom or political farsightedness; it rather needs a manager. Indeed, in an attempt to compare between the three presidents of Egypt, *Al-Arabi* newspaper (mouthpiece of the Nasserite party) depicted him as an 'administrator", in contrast to "al-za'im" (the leader) and the man of maneuvers (i.e. Nasser and Sadat).[169] In fact, one of Mubarak's own ministers described him as the CEO of Egypt.[170] Mohamed Al-Sayed Saeed, Deputy Director of Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, believes that the

Egyptian president does not really take politics into consideration. The focus on administration and the absence of politics are very much reminiscent, he argues, of the Soviet Union under the leadership of Brizheniv.[171] Briefly, Mubarak "is first and foremost an army officer, not a statesman or a policy-maker; he has neither worldwide vision nor a sense of historical processes."[172]

Mubarak's acquaintance with the basic rules of economics is not much better than his modest political background. In an illuminating article entitled "The Economic Philosophy in the President's Speeches", the distinguished economist Galal Amin sheds light on the economic logic inherent in Mubarak's public speeches. Mubarak, Amin explains, blindly reiterates what his economic advisors tell him without noticing the intrinsic deficiencies in their logic. He also overlooks some of the basic economic and social realities of the Egyptian society such as the reason why the poor segments decide to boycott campaigns for birth control.[173]

Mubarak's "limited breadth of perspective"[174] could be explained by shedding light on his professional career. Mubarak graduated from the Military Academy (situated in Heliopolis) and spent much of his career at the main Cairo air base, located nearby. His whole life was spent in the womb of the military, particularly in the Heliopolis and Nasr City area, a secular middle-class neighborhood. With the exception of one year in the Soviet Union, therefore, about forty years of Mubarak's life was spent in a comfortable middle-class milieu. In contrast, Nasser and Sadat had as young officers extensively moved about Egypt and had a long history of contacting - and joining - pre-revolution political forces. Both "prowled through the underground of revolutionary nationalist politics in the heady days of anticolonialism. Sadat even tried his hand at acting, while Nasser plotted from sunrise to sunset. By comparison, Mubarak's life has been staid, predictable, and unlikely to produce a deep and complex personality fired by a sense of historical destiny."[175]

The importance of understanding the country and bonding with the subjects one is about to rule was well-realized by the legendary Indian leader Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948). When he returned from his exile in South Africa, some of his aides called on him to become the political leader of the Indian nation. Gandhi's answer to them exhibited both wisdom and modesty. He said that he could not be a leader of a country he did not know much about.

Gandhi, accordingly, rode the train and traveled India from East to West and South to North before later on leading his people to independence and emancipation.[176]

In brief, Mubarak "is not a visionary. His legacy will be that he kept a cold peace with Israel and won his war against Islamists."[177] In the Third World, unfortunately, when no national plan is sought and no dream or vision pursued, clinging to power and authority becomes only what is left to a leader. In other words, longevity of governance coupled with the lack of vision leads, inevitably, to addiction to, and obsession with, staying in power. Former Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Boutros Boutros-Ghali confesses in his latest book *In Waiting of the Full moon* that power is like drugs: "I do not think I can ever leave power. To me, it became like drugs."[178] In the same book, he says: "Political authority has a special taste; it resembles alcoholic drinks, with a fifty percent alcohol that scorches the throat."[179] In the same book, Boutros-Ghali reveals the content of a conversation he had with President Mubarak on the 4th of January, 1999, in which they discussed the election of a new president for the UNESCO organization. Mubarak started by asking Ghali why Federicko Mayer would not run again for the presidency of UNESCO. Ghali replied by referring to the fact that the charter of the organization only allows for two terms. Mubarak's revealing comment was: "Why doesn't he modify the charter? [to be able to get reelected]"[180]

Undoubtedly, the dialogue between Mubarak and Boutros-Ghali reveals something crucial about the state of mind of President Mubarak and other leaders of Third World countries. To these elites, writes Magdy Mahana (a journalist and television anchor), the constitution, laws and regulations are just means to maintain power and authority. So instead of these laws being respected and observed, they are constantly harnessed for the interest of the people on the top. To Mubarak, in short, laws shall bow to the president, not vice versa.[181] Indeed, Mubarak at heart is just "a gendarme determined to keep intact the ruler's imperative."[182]

5- Pragmatism

Mubarak is a staunch pragmatist. Ideologies and principles mean little to him. While both Nasser and Sadat were in the end pragmatists as well, ideologies and beliefs still had a recognizable place in their regimes, often manifesting themselves in the reasoning and

planning of decisions, internal and foreign. Nasser revived the up till then purely theoretical idea of pan-Arabism and introduced it to his people who had not hitherto been familiar with it. In a sense, Arab Nationalism guided his foreign policy and in some cases cost him much. Some scholars argue that his adherence to pan-Arabism forced him to accept the union with Syria in 1958 and that it caused too the catastrophic defeat against Israel in 1967.

After abandoning Arabism in the aftermath of Sinai II and beginning the rapprochement with the Americans, Sadat tried to associate himself with Islam. His words "bordered on projecting the image of a quasi-prophet."[183] He told his people that he had asked God to "inspire" him with power and that God chose him to bear the responsibility of peace and to repeat Zakaria's mission to spread peace and correctness. "I did not come here except to deliver a message"[184], he declared. Meanwhile, the official media named him *'the Pious President'* and *'the Sixth Righteous Caliph'* and called his Egypt 'the country of science and faith'. The heavy religious symbolism notwithstanding, Islam remained subservient to other goals and objectives.[185] In contrast, the Mubarak years are void of any great idea, or any overriding principle. He neither flirted with Arab nationalism nor with Islam and seemed intent on keeping ideologies at arm's length.

Quite normally, in fact, "with no experience in the struggle for power and little taste for the world stage"[186], Mubarak had no choice but to adopt a pragmatic approach. The times of Mubarak are also different. The ardent ideologies that dominated the political life of the Arab world in the 50s, 60s and 70s are something of the past. Today, nationalism "alone remains, and for most Arab countries it is increasingly a pragmatic, economically oriented nationalism without much sentimental overlay"[187].

6- Lack of Charisma

To both analysts and ordinary people, Mubarak's uncharismatic personality is an undisputed fact. "There is no particular animus toward the man at the helm but no great affection for him, either. Hosni Mubarak has not bonded with his people", says distinguished academic Fouad Ajami.

Compared with Nasser's charisma and Sadat's flamboyance (or even Saddam's adventurism, Gaddafi's rhetoric appeal and Assad's wisdom), Mubarak is certainly seen as uncharismatic and stolid. He was initially welcomed but then satirized for his blandness;

Egyptians, for example, called him *La Vache Qui Rit* (The Laughing Cow) after a brand of French Cheese.[188]

In his first years in power, his performance in public speeches, press conferences and interviews was at best mediocre. His poor English language and limited experience in the dynamics of international press conferences led him to commit a number of blunders and soon his advisors convinced him to address the press in Arabic.[189] His first interview with a US news channel conducted in the wake of Sadat's assassination exhibited his lack of ease before cameras and failure to come up with the right answers. For example, when asked about what he most feared, he said "nothing". On that, Robert Springborg who had spent years in the Egyptian capital and is an expert in the Egyptian character, comments:

"While to a Western audience this bisyllabic answer was acceptable if uninformative, to a Moslem audience a man not fearing God, especially when his predecessor had just been gunned down by Islamic extremists, was either a fool or a nonbeliever."[190]

But the blunders were not limited to his dealings with the international media. At a visit to a factory in 1986, he asked a female worker about the amount of her salary. When she replied that it was sixty pounds, he proceeded to ask whether she managed to spend all of it. This answer "suggested either a sadistic streak or remarkable naiveté."[191] As a result of the series of slip-ups, "his first steps as president were accompanied by a despicable campaign of jokes and anecdotes aimed at belittling him and blemishing his intellectual and leadership abilities."[192] Also, whenever asked why he did not appoint a vice president, his cliché reply was that he did not find anyone who was qualified to assume the position. Such answers infuriate his people, for they imply that a rich country like Egypt is too barren to produce individuals who merit the position. Very recently, he provoked the Shia communities in the Arab world when he gave a shocking statement in an interview with Al-Arabiya news channel: "Definitely Iran has influence on Shias. Shias are 65% of the Iraqis…*Most of the Shias are loyal to 'Iran', and not to the countries they are living in*"[193] (emphasis mine). The announcement, which amounts to an accusation of treason, stirred anger among Shias in Iraq and other Arab states. In a joint press conference, Talabani, Ibrahim Al-Jaafari and Adnan Pachachi (Iraq's three highest ranking leaders) said Mubarak's statement is "a stab in their patriotism and their civilization."[194] An outraged Kuwaiti MP said: "We do not beg for

certificates of allegiance to our countries from Mubarak".[195] In a nutshell, Mubarak's dealing with the press is, at best, unimpressive.

2- Presidential Advisors

In contrast to Nasser and Sadat who surrounded themselves with many advisors, Mubarak predominantly relied on a small number of aides throughout his twenty-five year rule, the most prominent of which were Osama Al-Baz, Mustafa Al-Fiky, Safwat Al-Sharif and, most recently, Omar Soliman and Gamal Mubarak.[196]

1- Osama Al-Baz

Al-Baz is a career diplomat. He joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as a third secretary in 1956 after obtaining a degree in law from Cairo University and working for a short time as a court investigator. He was dispatched by the government to the United States in the early 1960s to carry out postgraduate studies at Harvard University,[197] but returned without a degree. Upon his return, he worked as the director of the office of Sami Sharaf, a 'free officer' who headed President Nasser's secretariat for more than ten years and was among the group of Nasserist officials who were purged by Sadat in May 1971. During that period, Al-Baz maintained day-to-day contact with a large number of officers who work at the presidency. In fact, Al-Baz owes not terminating his career in 1971 to these officers. After Mubarak became vice-president in 1975, Al-Baz was chosen to brief him on foreign affairs. He also worked closely with President Sadat and was one of the influential members in the Egyptian negotiating team at Camp David. Being "a survivalist par excellence", he survived the demise of Sadat and maintained his close ties with the presidency to become Mubarak's "chief foreign policy confidante."[198] For the entirety of Mubarak's tenure, Al-Baz remained the head of the presidential staff while retaining his position as First Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. From that position, "he has played a key role in advancing or blocking the careers of several members or potential members of the upper ranks of the political elite."[199] Though Al-Baz is thought to have held Nasserist or quasi-Nasserist views, he advocated under Mubarak a foreign policy that maintains a close relationship with the United States. Anyhow, many believe him to be, in essence, ambitious and conspiratorial, and

when it comes to his influence on political matters, the latter (that is career considerations) presumably overbid the former (personal convictions). [200]

There is no doubt that Al-Baz's weight in the decision-making process declined with the rise of the role of other contenders for the President's ear and heart, in particular head of intelligence Omar Soliman and Mubarak's son Gamal. His role now, as a well-informed source says, "is more related to ad-hoc troubleshooting than being really institutionalized." A survivalist, Al-Baz still remains close to the President, though.[201]

2- Mustafa Al-Fiky

Just like Al-Baz, Al-Fiky was a Nassersit student activist who had been sent to London to pursue post-graduate studies. He obtained a PhD degree from SOAS (School of Oriental and African Studies) on the role of Copts in Egyptian politics. He was picked up by Al-Baz to work in the presidency in the 1980s and was soon promoted to the spot of the president's secretary for information and supervision, a position he kept for seven years. He was also the liaison officer between the President and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for several years. Al-Baz thus "lost a client and gained a competitor".[202] In the early 1990s, he was removed, however, from the president's personal entourage for unknown reasons and returned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He became Egypt's ambassador to Vienna and to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Upon his return from Austria, he was appointed to the People's Assembly and headed the parliament's foreign relations committee.[203]

3- Safwat Al-Sharif

Al-Sharif is a former intelligence officer. He was the Minister of Information from 1983 to 2004. In 2002, he became the Secretary-General of the NDP after Minister of Agriculture Yusuf Wali was purged from that position against the backdrop of corruption allegations. Moreover, he was the spokesperson of the Egyptian government, explaining, defending and preaching about domestic and foreign policies. In foreign affairs, Al-Sharif joined Mubarak in most of his outside trips, and was frequently chosen as his personal envoy to the Arab world, particularly to the Libyan President Muammar Al-Gaddafi.

Controlling the gigantic media apparatus and architecting the ruling party's numerous patronage networks, Al-Sharif turned into a real "emperor".[204] At a time when ministers and

prime ministers were subjected to harsh criticism in the press (including the state-controlled print media), opposition leaders and independent papers would refrain from criticizing him in public for fear of retaliation. However, in the bone-crushing struggle for power and dominance in the Egyptian state and ruling party between the old guard (represented by Al-Sharif and the apparatchiks of the regime) and the new guard (spearheaded by Gamal Mubarak and his associates), the latter ultimately gained the upper hand. Al-Sharif was removed from office in the cabinet reshuffle of summer 2004 and appointed as head of the insignificant Shura Council. Meanwhile, a spokesperson for the presidency and another for the prime minister were instituted to ensure that no future minister of information would enjoy the tremendous powers Al-Sharif did.[205]

Mubarak's advisors and aides lack any sort of independent power base. According to Springborg, they are:

"managers, advisers, and assistants, devoid of independent power bases in government or in private activities and without significant national reputations that could facilitate a semiautonomous exercise of power…..not having day-to-day management responsibility for organizations outside the presidency, they cannot establish the impressive networks of clients that their predecessors amassed. Mubarak's inner elite is not the equivalent of the "centers of power" that encroached upon Nasser's authority…nor are they multimillionaire capitalists of the sort that surrounded Sadat and who built vast empires in the *Infitah* economy."[206]

The question of the influence these advisors have on the president and the role they perform in the decision-making process is rather controversial. On one hand, the 'kill the messenger' school believes that in the Third world advisors touch the waters of the leader they work with before explicitly expressing their opinions. With time, they develop a clear idea of how their patron thinks and would most probably not dare express opinions that sharply deviate from his stated positions. Ministers working with Saddam Hussein - a ruthless and intolerant dictator - were particularly notorious for such an attitude; none of them dared propose ending the war with Iran or oppose the occupation of Kuwait. On the other hand, it is plausible to argue that the more inarticulate the leader is and lacking of a vision of his own, the more influential his advisors could be. Implying how powerful Mubarak's presidential advisors are in an interview with *Al-Arabi*, former Minister of Housing Hassaballah Al-

Kafrawi said that there are four or five individuals around the president, "may Allah guide them or get rid of them."[207]

One of his aides, however, has a strong power base, derived in reality from the power of the presidential center itself, namely Hosni Mubarak's son, Gamal Mubarak.

4- Gamal Mubarak

Gamal Mubarak is Hosni Mubarak's second son. He was born in Cairo in 1963. He received a B.A. in Business Administration from the American University in Cairo in 1982 and a Masters degree in 1986. After graduation, he worked for the Bank of America, first at the Cairo branch and then at London's, where he spent seven whole years (1987-1994). He then pursued a business career setting up 'MidInvest', an investment firm whose capital was reported to exceed $100 million.

Initially, Gamal's interests seemed to be restricted to economic affairs and business circles. In 1995, he joined the Egyptian-American Presidential Council. He also became a member of the American Chamber of Commerce in Cairo in the same year and became the spokesperson of the council in July 1997. In these forums, Gamal came in close contact with a large number of Egypt's leading businessmen who constituted his real entourage; many of whom later on became cabinet ministers or leading figures in the ruling NDP (Ahmed Nazif's first cabinet formed in July 2004 included two businessmen and the number increased to six in Nazif's second cabinet, formed in January 2006). Gamal is also a board member of The Arab African Bank, 'The Egyptian Center for Economic Studies' and 'Egypt Trust'.[208]

Gamal's political career started in 2000 when he was appointed to the NDP's General Secretariat. In September 2002, the NDP held its 8th general conference and the 'Policies Secretariat' was created with Gamal on top of it. The secretariat was responsible for the legislation the government sends to the People's Assembly for ratification. The NDP's general conferences were since then held on an annual basis and soon did the secretariat become the NDP's most important division, the party's 'heart and mind' as the Secretary-General described it.

The power and influence of the Policies Secretariat increased with time to dominate various aspects of Egyptian politics and society. A profile of the membership of the secretariat and its extensive involvement in Egyptian politics was elaborately explained in an article

published in an Egyptian weekly entitled "The Committee that Rules Egypt". The secretariat includes 233 members, fifty-eight percent of whom are businessmen, and only 0.7 percent belongs to the military, a clear indication of Gamal's type of alliances. The secretariat also includes 27 members of the Shura Council who command 60 percent of its committees as well as 14 members in the People's Assembly (2000-2005 term), who head eleven of its committees (57 percent of the Assembly's committees). The membership list includes also presidents of six Egyptian universities, Head of the Industries Union, Head of the Union of Trade Chambers and Secretary-General of the National Council of Women.[209]

Many analysts saw in Gamal's speedy rise in Egyptian politics and economics the prelude of a grand scheme to groom him as president. For example, the political sociologist Saad Eddin Ibrahim merged the Arabic words for republic (*gumhuriya*) and kingdom (*malakiya*) into the term '*gumlukiya'*, to depict the new tradition some republican regimes in the Arab world have invented, that is passing power on to their sons. The plan worked perfectly in Syria, was aborted in Iraq by the American invasion, and is still underway in Libya, Yemen and probably Egypt. The formation of the first popular movement that broke the deep-rooted stagnation of Egyptian politics and, for the first time, defied the regime by organizing regular anti-regime demonstrations (The Kifaya Movement) was also inspired by what its founding members perceived as imminent: a father-to-son transmission of power. Their slogan is "No for Extension, No for Inheritance" and Gamal Mubarak remains one of their prime targets. In fact, a whole political movement (composed of Kifaya and numerous sister groups like 'Artists for Change' and 'Students for Change') has made thwarting hereditary rule its major objective. Meanwhile, scores of articles that filled the newspapers have tackled the issue of power inheritance, either attacking Gamal for taking advantage of his father's position or defending his right, like any other citizen, to pursue a political career. The prominent novelist Alaa Al-Aswany, who writes regularly for *Al-Arabi* newspaper, said:

"Egypt is not a private estate that a father can pass on to his son. Gamal Mubarak has the right to run for any state position, but only after the implementation of real democratic reform that would put him on an equal footing with any other Egyptian citizen."[210]

In the same vein, Saad Eddin Ibrahim expressed his appreciation of Gamal's human qualities, but his disapproval of the idea of him inheriting his father's position: "He's a decent

human being – qualified, well-informed, well-educated. But to be parachuted on this country as the new leader is a disservice to him and to the country."[211]

Many other voices and interest groups, however, were pushing for the promotion of Gamal's political career. As early as September 2000, Essam Refaat, editor-in-chief of Al-Ahram's economic weekly, *Al-Ahram Al-Iqtisadi*, praised the qualities of Gamal and begged President Mubarak to give him a real chance:

"Mr. President, I want to speak here frankly and in true sincerity about one who has been giving himself selflessly, with no ulterior thought other than dedicated service to his homeland…The question is: why should we not benefit from the abilities and talents of this man?...Mr. President. I do not understand why the National Party should not itself be promoting him in the upcoming elections to parliament…Mr. President we beg of you, be fair with this young man. I am well aware of your decision that he must be kept away from "politics", but I also have come to know you as a just ruler, whose just nature will manifest the fairness due him."[212]

Concerned about an unknown - and seemingly depressing - future, the whole country seemed to be checking the possibilities of Gamal's ascent to power. In face of these allegations, the Mubaraks repeatedly denied the existence of any such plan.[213] 'Egypt is no Syria', it is a republic with deep-rooted democratic traditions, they assured.[214] Still, opponents did not believe Mubarak's statements. The amendment of article 76 of the constitution paves the way for the takeover of Gamal, they argue. Stipulating that independent candidates should secure the endorsement of at least 250 members of the People's Assembly, the Shura Council and municipal councils means that no other candidate than the NDP's will run for the 2011 presidential elections. Moreover, Gamal was recently named one of three deputy secretaries general of the NDP and twenty of his close associates took high-ranking posts in the party. The move was seen by critics as a further step toward putting the NDP at the service of Gamal's succession plan. "Who can deny this is anything but a vehicle for succession?"[215], wonders Hala Mustafa, political analyst and editor-in-chief of the monthly *Democracy*.

Gamal's main focus, by virtue of background, profession and connections, is on internal economic conditions. He is a staunch believer in economic reform (along the prescriptions of the IMF), integrating in international markets, expanding the role of the private sector and reducing the intervention of the state in economic matters. The Secretariat

of Policies and Gamal are working closely with the 'economic group' of the cabinet (i.e. Ministers of Finance, Investment, and Industry and Foreign Trade) to advance that agenda.[216] In January 2003, for instance, Gamal oversaw the floatation of the Egyptian pound, a decision the Egyptian government has been reluctant to take for long despite the nagging of international financial institutions. Today, it is most likely that no major economic decision is taken without his direct involvement.

Gamal's movement was not confined to the domestic arena, however; he increasingly gave more attention to international politics, in particular Egypt's relationship with the United States. He started expressing opinions about foreign policy issues, such as the 'strategic' relationship with the US, the situation in Iraq and developments in peace negotiations between Palestinians and Israel. In 2003, he visited the US and was received at the White House, the State Department and the Pentagon, meeting with President Bush, Vice President Cheney, Secretary of State Colin Powell, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and national security advisor Condoleezza Rice. Afterwards, he met with a number of world leaders, either accompanying President Mubarak in his outside trips or taking initiatives of his own. In January 2004, he met with the Israeli Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom and in the spring of 2006, he visited Beirut and met with Saad Al-Hariri, son of departed Rafik Al-Hariri and leader of the Future Bloc, a major faction of the 14th of March anti-Syria coalition.

In brief, Gamal is deeply involved in the planning and making of domestic policies – economic and political. Starting his political career from the NDP and aiming for winning party members over required, reasonably, paying attention to the problems and interests of the lower echelons of party members and the vast majority of these interests are connected to domestic problems and challenges.[217] Furthermore, his economic and business background drew him closer to economic questions which, accordingly, drew like-minded economists and businessmen closer to him. Gamal thus remained embroiled in the complex web of domestic problems with far less interest in international affairs. With a very few exceptions, his interest in foreign policy is focused on the United States and stems probably from a firm conviction that for his political ambitions to come about, a green light need to be on in Washington.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs is undoubtedly one of the president's chief advisors on foreign affairs. The Head of the General Intelligence Service – Omar Soliman – has also

played a crucial role in policy-making in the last few years. Their role will be explained in detail in sections III and IV.

III The Foreign Ministry

1- Historical Background and Development of Structure

In the Arab world, Egypt has possibly the most professional and well-established foreign policy bureaucracy. The genesis of the current Egyptian diplomatic system goes back to the time of Mohamed Ali Pasha, when a *diwan* (department) for trade and foreign affairs was established in the year 1826. The attempt constituted a part of Mohamed Ali's attempt to modernize Egypt on all fronts, including the creation of an efficient bureaucratic establishment. The department was primarily concerned with organizing the then flourishing trade with European merchants. Under Saeed Pasha (Mohamed Ali's son), governmental *diwans* were restructured into four major departments, including one for foreign affairs, which was concerned with dealings with foreign issues such as international treaties, foreign prerogatives in Egypt (e.g. the Suez Canal Company) as well as combating slavery. In 1878, a fundamental change in the Egyptian regime took place as a result of the accumulation of debts and the rising pressure of European nations; the absolute authority of Khedive Tawfiq was strictly restricted and the label of government departments was, meanwhile, changed from 'diwan' to 'nazara', so the 'Diwan of Foreign Affairs' changed into the 'Foreign Nazara'.

The 'Foreign Nazara' was suspended when Egypt was declared a British protectorate in December 1914. Egypt's foreign affairs started since then to be handled by London's representative in Cairo; foreign ambassadors were informed that contacts with the Egyptian government would come to pass through the British High Emissary. In 1922, however, the protectorate was abolished and Egypt was recognized as an independent state. Accordingly, Egypt's Foreign Ministry returned to function in the same year and diplomatic missions were dispatched to foreign capitals for the first time since Egypt's fall under the Ottoman rule in 1517.[218] Even with that, ironically, the ministry did not gain its full independence, for the Monarch dominated it; choices of ambassadors were made by the King and diplomats were communicating with him directly, over the heads of the Foreign Ministry and the cabinet leading to frequent frictions between the palace and the cabinet. Obviously, these tensions seriously undermined the efficiency of the Egyptian diplomacy.

After Egypt was granted its full independence by the provisions of the 1936 Treaty with Britain, it was allowed to raise its level of representation abroad to fully-fledged embassies and to join the League of Nations as well (and later the United Nations). Still, Egypt was not permitted to take any political stances that contravene the alliance with Britain spelled out in the treaty.[219]

Under Mubarak, five ministers took charge of the ministry: Kamal Hassan Ali (May 1980 -July 1984); Essmat Abdel-Meguid (July 1984 – May 1991); Amr Moussa (May 1991 – May 2001); Ahmed Maher (May 2001 – July 2004); and Ahmed Abu El-Gheit (July 2004 -). Even though Egypt's foreign policy did not undergo much transformation as a consequence of the change in foreign ministers, some variations in 'style' can be figured out. Abdel-Meguid belonged to the classical diplomatic school. He believed in quiet diplomacy and, for the most part, limited himself to the role of carrying out the instructions of the President. On the contrary, Amr Moussa was the energetic and vigorous type. He took initiatives, expanded the jurisdiction of the ministry and skillfully used the media to bolster his image. He also sought to revive Egypt's leading role in the Arab world, which bound him to clash with both Arabs and Israelis. With the ascent of Ahmed Maher, a return to the quiet diplomatic school was guaranteed. In fact, it could be argued that Maher exemplified, in style, the other extreme of Moussa.

Egypt's diplomatic expertise and connections is unrivaled in the Arab world. In 1982, Egypt had diplomatic representation in 95 countries.[220] Today, approximately 950 diplomatic officers are working in around 150 diplomatic missions nearly covering the whole world.

2- Responsibilities

Within the Egyptian bureaucracy, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the major institution that is concerned with running the country's international relations. Article 157 of the Egyptian constitution (issued in 1971) stipulates that the Minister of Foreign Affairs plans the general policy of his ministry in accordance with the overall policies of the state and then executes it. The law governing the role and tasks of the ministry, however, clearly makes the ministry subordinate to the presidency and limits its actual powers. It specifies that:

1- The President takes the supreme political decisions that direct the broad foreign policy of the state.

2- The Foreign Minister is the President's chief "advisor" on foreign policy issues. He also monitors Egypt's interaction with the outside world and takes decisions on day-to-day matters.
3- The duties of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are primarily concerned with:
    a- Planning and executing the foreign policy of the state.
    b- Coordinating with the other organs of the state that deal with foreign affairs (e.g. Ministry of Commerce, the General Intelligence Service…etc).

In conclusion, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs performs three basic roles: (1) A consultative role; it is the President's principal advisor on foreign policy and is frequently asked to present its views on particular issues, (2) an intelligence role: gathering information through the some 150 embassies it administers all over the world and (3) a diplomatic instrument carrying out the foreign policy decisions previously made by the President of the state.[221]

In addition to its marginal contribution to the foreign policy-making process compared to that of the presidency, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is frequently kept in the shadows not knowing much of the president's moves, including vital decisions and correspondences. Exchanging messages directly with other countries without involving the ministry was Sadat's preferred method of diplomacy. In the early 1970s, for example, his ambassadors to Arab capitals did not know about the many visits Sadat's personal messenger – Ashraf Marwan – made to these countries.[222] Moreover, Sadat's most earth-shattering foreign policy decision (visiting Jerusalem in 1977 and starting negotiations with Israeli leaders amidst widespread Arab disapproval) was taken, ironically, without consulting his chief foreign policy advisor: the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Sadat well knew that the foreign ministry would oppose the move. Top diplomats placed high value on Egypt's status in the Arab world. They opposed any policy that would lead to Egypt's isolation in its 'natural' sphere of influence. But Sadat did not want to be constrained by anyone. As a result, two foreign ministers (Ismail Fahmy and Mohamed Ibrahim Kamel) and a minister of state for foreign affairs (Mohamed Riad) resigned in protest over Sadat's single-handed presidential policies in the period from November 1977 to September 1978. Since then, however, none of the higher calibers of the ministry ever expressed in public his disapproval of, or indignation at, presidential policies.[223]

The limited responsibility of the Foreign Ministry notwithstanding, the personality of the Foreign Minister is crucial in upgrading or downgrading the role of the ministry in foreign policy decision-making. For example, under Ahmed Maher (2001-2004), much of the ministry's long-established tasks were taken over by the General Intelligence (headed by the influential general Omar Soliman) or by the Minister of Information (Safwat Al-Sharif), something that could hardly take place under Maher's predecessor (Amr Moussa), who is known for his brightness and his formidable and uncompromising personality. In the history of Egyptian foreign ministers, Moussa was the most popular and charismatic; people liked him, wished he would succeed Mubarak and even songs praised him.[224] It is believed that he has some kind of yearning for the years of Gamal Abdel-Nasser too, but he frequently denied that.[225]

Indeed, the role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the decision-making process was the largest under Amr Moussa (1991-2001) due primarily to his personality and the close and solid relationship he had with the President. To be sure, Mubarak trusted Moussa and believed in his expertise and cleverness, and the latter, obviously, took advantage of this to advance his views and expand the role of the foreign ministry. For instance, Moussa - and the top experts of the ministry - was the real architect of the initiative taken in 1994-1995 to wage a wide-ranging diplomatic campaign to pressure Israel into joining the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Certainly, President Mubarak approved the plan, but the idea was invented by the ministry and the show was fully run by its personnel. Similarly, Minister Ahmed Abu El-Gheit insisted, upon being chosen as Minister of Foreign Affairs in summer 2004, that the position of the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs remains vacant. Abu El-Gheit realized that such an appointment would curtail much of his authority. In other words, though his authority is on the whole curtailed by the power of the presidency, the minister can still maneuver to increase his input in the decision-making process.

IV The Military Establishment

There seems to be an exaggeration on the part of the public as to the role the military plays in Egyptian foreign policy. It is may be attributed to the wide involvement of the military establishment in civil life; all presidents since 1952 came from the military, many mayors and heads of governmental companies are former officers and the military

establishment has since the 1980s been involved in various non-military activities (e.g. manufacturing electrical appliances, executing land reclamation projects and sponsoring football teams…etc). In Foreign policy, the role of the military remains limited. A few points are noteworthy here:

First, the role of the military in the country's political life has been far diminished since Nasser's days. Also, the neutrality of the army has been, at least partially, sustained by the existence of a military president. Meanwhile, the army has been rewarded in the economic sphere by tolerating its wide involvement in agriculture and industry.

Second, the president is the Supreme Commander of the armed forces. Article 143 of the constitution stipulates, moreover, that the president has the right to appoint and dismiss army officers. It makes more sense therefore to assume that the military establishment is controlled by the presidency, not vice versa.

Third, knowing that the army is one major source of change, Third world leaders do their best to maintain the loyalty of officer corps. In Egypt, wide transfers and retirement plans were carried out after the assassination of President Sadat and continued in fact into the 1980s and 1990s as militant groups remained on the offensive. At the same time, the allegiance of the military establishment has been guaranteed through the distributions of benefits and privileges.

The military also proved to be the regime's real solid base in the face of internal threats to stability. As the encounters with the 1977 food riots and the Islamic resurgence of the early 1990s verified, the army remained loyal to the regime and ready to defend it at times of crises. In fact, the army's impressive devotion and effectiveness during the riots of the Central Security Forces (*Al-Amn Al-Markazy*) in 1986 proved that it is a firm supporter of the regime, even if this position puts it on a collision course with a sister security organ. So even though it is unlikely that the officer corps remained over the past two decades totally immune to the waves of national disappointments, economic frustration and religious fundamentalism that have swept across wide segments of the Egyptian society, it stands to reason that army generals are wary of social upheavals that could threaten the state and its constitution and committed to preserving them by force if needed.

Fourth, the military establishment can, still, play a direct role in foreign affairs when the issue at stake is relevant to military activities, like sending troops to combat, or reducing

military supplies and weapons. For example, it was reported that Mubarak declined the American appeal to send Egyptian troops to Iraq partially because the leaders of the army rejected the offer on the grounds that the venture would be too unsafe for Egyptian troops. Also, Mubarak's sharp resistance to reducing the current volume of the US military aid is tied to his knowledge that such a measure would cause deep discontent and irritation among officer corps. Still, the preferences of the top brass are subordinate to those advocated by the presidency. In 1990, Defense Minister Youssef Sabry Abu-Taleb expressed his reservations about dispatching Egyptian troops to Kuwait, but ultimately yielded to the decision of the executive.[226]

V The Intelligence

Naturally, much secrecy and ambiguity surrounds the activities of any intelligence body in the world and the General Intelligence Service in Egypt is certainly no exception, for there is, in fact, a striking scarcity of studies on the tasks, responsibilities and activities of the intelligence in Egyptian politics. Nevertheless, what can be known is that it is primarily involved in gathering information. In addition, it is asked to produce strategic assessments of situations (or issues) which are presented to the president.

Just like in the case of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a powerful head of the intelligence can augment his institution's weight in the decision-making process. The best example could be derived from the time of Nasser when Salah Nasr transformed his organization into *'a state within the state'*. Indeed, he had created what many dubbed as '*Dawlet Al-Mukhabarat*' (The State of Intelligence). Nasr was only removed after the disastrous defeat against Israel in 1967, when Nasser felt that the dismantling of the 'centers of power' in his regime would enhance his eroding legitimacy. Under Mubarak, the role of the Intelligence in the foreign policy decision-making process increased with the rise of a new star: Omar Soliman.

Omar Soliman

Omar Soliman was born in the Southern province of Qena in 1935. He moved to Cairo at the age of nineteen to join the Military Academy. After graduation, he was sent to Moscow where he pursued further military studies at the Fronz Military Academy in Moscow. In the

1980s, he received a B.A. and an M.A. in Political Science from Ain Shams University and Cairo University respectively. Afterwards, he headed the Military Intelligence Agency and the General Intelligence Service (*Al-Mukhabarat Al-Ammah*).

Soliman's working relationship with Mubarak was exceptionally consolidated in the summer of 1995. In a meeting arranged to discuss Mubarak's forthcoming visit to Addis Ababa, Soliman insisted that Mubarak should take with him his armored vehicle, in spite of the vocal reservations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' experts who thought the measure would offend the Ethiopians. In Addis Ababa, Mubarak was subject to a serious assassination attempt that could have claimed his life had Soliman's advice been ignored. Soliman, in short, saved the President's life.

Soliman's influence soon did rise in Egyptian politics, especially in the handling of Egypt's foreign affairs. He became responsible for the Palestinian file, in particular Egypt's efforts to mediate between the various Palestinian factions as well as the training assistance the Egyptian government provides to the Palestinian police force on a regular basis. To revive the dead peace process, he mediated between Palestinians and Israelis and did quite a good job. In fact, American and European officials were impressed by the energy he has brought to peace negotiations after years of immobility. He, too, became drawn into Egypt's relations with its Southern neighbor (the Sudan), whose decades-long civil war and its repercussions continued to pose a serious threat to Egypt's national security. Soliman also paved the way for Mubarak's visit to Khartoum, the first in fourteen years. Most recently, he was sent to Damascus and Beirut in an effort to alleviate the rising tension in Syrian-Lebanese relations resulting from the assassination of the former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Al-Hariri.[227]

Simultaneously, Soliman, who has been operating behind the scenes for decades, acquired a very public profile. The name of the man-in-the-shadows became frequently referred to in the Egyptian media, including official TV channels and semi-official newspapers. His first public appearance was in June 2000 when he attended the funeral of Hafez Assad with Mubarak and the rest of Arab leaders. Today, Soliaman "is portrayed as one of the more powerful figures in Egypt, someone deeply involved in all matters of state and enjoying a close working relationship with the president."[228] Therefore, many observers, including elements within the ruling establishment, put him on the shortlist of candidates who might succeed Mubarak. His ability as an experienced army and intelligence man to control

the different arms of the security apparatus in the post-Mubarak phase seems to be one of his strongest credentials to assume such a position. This, indeed, should not be underestimated in Egypt, where the officer corps could obstruct unwanted decisions and push for others.

The rise of Soliman's role in Egyptian foreign relations is due to a number of reasons. The first is Soliman's professional competence. There seems to be a consensus among his colleagues and international interlocutors on his knowledge, expertise and skills. The second reason is the President's personal trust in him. In the words of a reliable informant, "chemistry works well between Mubarak and Soliman." Just like Mubarak, Soliman does not appear to adopt a distinct political doctrine, and his general ideas and worldviews are quite similar to Mubarak's −"They share the same vision, and belong to the same camp", says an Egyptian politician who had a long working relationship with both men. To be sure, a high-profile role in Egyptian polity can not be sustained without the president's blessings.

Third, the increasing involvement of security matters in foreign policy issues in recent years can not be overlooked. For example, the Palestinian portfolio has been, since the eruption of the Intifada in 2000, increasingly dominated by the security dimension. Negotiating a Palestinian-Israeli (or Palestinian-Palestinian) cease-fire or engaging in the details of deploying Egyptian troops on the borders in the wake up of Israel's pull out of Gaza is a role that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is not equipped to play. A number of blunders committed by diplomats on these matters were sufficed to sideline the Foreign Ministry and allow the Intelligence more leverage.[229] Soliman has dealt with these issues, in great detail, with remarkable success.

VI Business Associations

The open-door economic policy ushered by Sadat just four months after the October war paved the way for the revitalization of Egypt's business class that had been destroyed - economically and politically - by the harsh measures Nasser's revolution had taken against their economic monopoly and political dominance. Law 43 of February 1974 (and the series of laws that succeeded it) provided generous incentives to foreign investors and Egyptian capital, including a marked reduction of the privileged status the public sector had enjoyed under Nasser, allowing thus the private sector to play a bigger role in the national economy.

In line with the rise of their influence in Egyptian politics, the percentage of businessmen and professionals in cabinets rose dramatically in the 1970s and 1980s: from a low 2.4 percent in 1970, to 9.8 percent in 1971-2, to a high 14.7 percent in the period between 1974 and 1982. In the first ten years of Mubarak's tenure (from 1981 to 1990), the percentage rose further to around 20 percent.[230] Concurrently, the interaction between economic and political power strikingly intensified as manifested in the emergence of two new trends to Egyptian politics: an increasing number of former ministers joining the private sector as soon they leave office, including those who did not have a previous business experience, and an increasing number of businessmen joining political parties and running for parliamentary seats.[231] Many, in fact, got elected and their presence in the People's Assembly has steadily increased in the last three parliamentary sessions (1995-2000, 2000-2005, and 2005-2010).

Unlike the 1950s and 1960s when capitalists were perceived by the political elite as a potential source of threat, the Egyptian state from the 1970s and onwards was keen to maintain a special relationship with businessmen. President Mubarak is usually accompanied by prominent businessmen in his outside trips. Receiving representatives of national and foreign business organizations and visiting factories and industrial units has also become a presidential routine. Mubarak's public discourse, furthermore, stresses on the positive contribution this group makes to the national economy and the welfare of the society, in particular their valuable role in combating youth unemployment.

To augment their status and advance their economic and political agenda, Egyptian businessmen have since the late 1970s organized themselves into numerous business associations, trade unions, and chambers of commerce. These associations are not solely concerned with economic and business matters, but also actively involved in political activities, like participating in public socioeconomic debates and promoting certain policies - domestic and foreign - that serve their economic interests. Moreover, many senior officials and leading NDP figures are members in these groupings. As such, "they have become very effective pressure groups."[232]

Three of these pressure groups validate the point. The first is the American Chamber of Commerce in Egypt (ACCE) that was established in 1982. By 1985, its membership list included the names of ten cabinet ministers, eleven former ministers as well as five who held ministerial positions after 1985. In addition, the list included most of Egypt's leading

businessmen and bankers. In addition to advocating economic liberalization, the dismantling of the public sector and attracting foreign investments, the ACCE "has been an active lobby in promoting Egyptian-American economic and political links"[233]. For example, the frequent visits of congressmen to Egypt are organized by the ACCE in coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In addition, 'door knock' visits to the United States are paid at least annually once. During these visits, members of the ACCE meet with members of the US administration, Congress, international financial institutions (e.g. World Bank, IMF), think tanks and business corporations. Needless to say, discussions in such meetings are not confined to economic topics; they usually touch on political affairs as well.

The second is the Egyptian Society for Businessmen (ESB) that was initiated in the late 1970s. Its links to the political elite was so formidable that "hardly any top decision-maker, including all prime ministers since 1979, has declined an invitation to speak to members of the ESB, as each eagerly hopes to obtain an endorsement of his policy."[234] The ESB is also an outspoken supporter of a faster pace of economic reform, including diminishing the economic role of the public sector and reducing state subsidies.[235]

The third influential business organization is the Egyptian-American Presidential Council that was initiated with the blessing of the Egyptian and American governments in April 1995. The council played an active role in the issuing of a number of decrees that provided incentives to private capital and facilitated the business activities of the private sector. For example, in September 1995, the government allowed Egyptian private sector companies, for the first time, to participate with American enterprises in joint ventures in infrastructure fields, such as electricity, energy, transportation, free zones and banking. Afterwards, the private sector was allowed to construct and own private airports as well. Moreover, many of the laws governing the banking and finance sectors decreed in the second half of the 1990s came about as a direct result of the council's active lobbying.[236] Accordingly, "(p)ublic impression of the council was that it had become the prime source for policy ideas, and in effect the new 'shadow cabinet' in Egypt."[237]

The steady rise of the business community and the swift gains it made in the country's political and economic life alarmed many scholars and intellectuals. Leftist and nationalist thinkers and politicians warned of the imminent 'control of capital' on Egypt's society that would inevitably come at the expense of the needy and underprivileged. Some saw their over-

involvement in decision-making unacceptable. For example, prominent writer Mohamed Hassanein Heikal expressed his worries about the relationship between state and business:

"I am worried of the new capitalist class and its conduct, and I have my reasons. First, this new class is engaged more than it should with political authority and it tries to influence decisions. Second, it interferes more than it should in the media. And third, it interferes more than necessary in foreign policy."[238]

So what is the real effect of business associations on the making of foreign policy decisions? Businessmen, by definition, primarily focus on domestic economic issues. Their comeback to Egyptian economics and politics, moreover, was extremely recent (early 1980s), so their efforts concentrated first and foremost on protecting their nascent economic interests by organizing themselves in institutions and opening channels of communication with the ruling establishment. Afterwards, they started paying more attention to foreign affairs, particularly Egypt's relations with the United States and the European Union.

One factor that impedes the clout of business in policy-making is its apparent fragmentation. The business community in Egypt – and, in fact, in most Arab countries – is:

"likely to be divided between merchants and bankers with a stake in international trade and finance and local industrialists who flourish on state protection, subsidies and contracts. Industrialists themselves may divide between exporters and importers over such issues as the exchange rate of local currencies."[239]

Therefore, divisions between different businessmen on certain foreign policy issues regularly took place. They stemmed from the diverse connections and trade relations these capitalists have with different regions/countries. For example, in the early 1980s, when merchants whose interests were strictly tied to Arab and Gulf markets were eager to bring Egypt back to the Arab world, those with links to Europe and the US were either uninterested or even felt threatened. Similarly, businessmen whose interests are tied to Western markets and partners tend to be more dovish on the issue of the Arab-Israeli conflict/peace process. In short, the economic interests of capitalists are competitive and their stances on foreign policy issues are, accordingly, not monolithic.[240]

Additionally, businessmen find themselves embroiled in a double game. On one hand, they continue to pressure the government to yield to their demands which, sometimes, coincide with the demands of foreign parties, but, on the other, they are often used by the state

to perform roles that advance the latter's interests. For instance, the state has constantly tried to use capitalists to support it in its efforts to increase the volume of US aid and to help attract foreign investments. It also tried at times to convince them to gear their investments into certain divisions where state funding is extraordinarily lacking. After the 1992 earthquake destroyed many schools, for instance, the state sought the assistance of businessmen in its ambitious plan to construct one thousand new schools.

The objectives of both sides need not be necessarily contradictory. In fact, since the rise of Egypt's business class in the second half of the 1970s, the state and the business community saw eye-to-eye on many occasions and coordinated their efforts many times. However, if their interests are destined to clash, a crucial question to ask is: which party needs more the services of the other? Clearly, businesses are by far the weaker side. In authoritarian regimes, wealth accumulation and survival on the market is not possible without the state's approval, or at least its acquiescence. And in Egypt, businesses cannot easily escape from the fierce dominance of the state and its bureaucratic machinery. The Egyptian regime, furthermore, is determined to maintain its autonomy from different societal groups, so concessions, if at all, are limited and granted piecemeal. The fact that business dealings between Egyptian and Israeli businessmen ceased after the collapse of the peace process in the late 1990s demonstrates that business, more often than not, follows in the footsteps of politics, not vice versa. It is fair thus to assert that the role of businessmen in foreign policy is limited to backing current governmental orientations and policies, and not substituting them with other agendas of their own.[241] Still, their rising weight in Egyptian politics should not be neglected.

In conclusion, the weight of business associations in Egyptian politics has steadily risen under Mubarak. In foreign affairs, the thrust of their effort focused on Egyptian-American economic and trade relations. Their role is rather limited in other foreign policy fronts. Businessmen are predominantly concerned with defending their benefits and exhibited, on the whole, little interest in foreign policy affairs. In addition, the state was keen to prevent any of their groupings from turning into a powerful lobby that could jeopardize the state's entrenched grip on power.

VII Inter-Elite Dynamics

The President and his Aides: Boundaries of Interaction

Compared to Nasser, Mubarak always relied on a smaller number of political advisors on foreign policy matters. The rate of turnover of advisors - clearly demonstrated by the long tenure of foreign ministers and presidential advisors - was very limited too. Both factors further restricted the already minor influence of consultation in decision-making and inhibited development and change. Depending on a small number of pretty homogeneous individuals with quite similar ideas and backgrounds obstructed, no doubt, the entrance of 'different' approaches and 'fresh' views to the practice of foreign policy, and their long survival in office, surely, added an element of stagnation and immobility to Egypt's foreign policy. That this policy witnessed little change over the twenty-five years of Mubarak's rule comes thus as no surprise.

The role of political consultants was relatively higher during Mubarak's first years in office than afterwards. With little prior experience in international affairs, Mubarak was keen to learn and benefit from the wide knowledge, practice and expertise of his close aides, particularly Osama Al-Baz. Discussing matters of relevance to internal politics and economics with members of the National Democratic Party and opposition party leaders took place frequently too.

Nevertheless, the level of political consultancy decreased with the passage of time. Instead of a two-way traffic setting in which advisors both provide input to the process and implement the output, a one-way order emerged in which they merely play executive roles by carrying out the president's orders and instructions. Several factors helped bring about this development. First, Mubarak's confidence in his ability to successfully run the show grew with the accumulation of his international experience produced by years of surfing in the Middle East's troubled waters and, accordingly, his reliance on aides considerably diminished. Second, the aging of the President reduced his movement and activity. Now, Mubarak is, certainly, even less energetic and dynamic leader than he was in 1981 or 1991. As a result, most communication with aides takes place over the phone and is limited to vital issues; involvement in details, as in the old days, is conspicuously lacking.

It is important to note that, even in the 1980s, consultation was particularly high when the issue at stake was apolitical. For example, the decision to consider building nuclear plants to produce electricity was followed by wide discussions that included a large number of

scholars, scientists and technicians. Another example is the legal committee set up to defend in The Hague Egypt's right in Taba upon the Egyptian-Israeli agreement to use arbitration to solve the dispute. The committee comprised lawyers, historians and demographists, from all walks of life, including many from opposition parties. Another committee of a rather legal nature was formed in the mid-1990s to prepare for Egypt's NPT battle with Israel.

In fact, a general rule of foreign policy decision-making in Egypt is that the nature of the issue determines the level of presidential control. 'High politics' issues, such as grand strategy, political and national security topics are run by the president. Formulating policies on these vital issues in isolation of the president's approval is impossible. Presidential attention decreases with 'low politics' issues, such as economic and technical questions where his involvement is usually limited to broad directives, leading to wider room to assistants for initiation and implementation of ideas and proposals.[242]

To all intents and purposes, the effectiveness of assistants is hampered by the lack of an institutional framework through which they can work efficiently. Mubarak's advisors are, Kazziha explains, "not advisors in the sense of having an elaborate institution under their auspices which is producing options for the president. They are not like (U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza) Rice who has a team of researchers on this and that topic."[243] In other words, they merely express personal convictions and opinions. Hence, over time, their ability to come up with fresh ideas and perspectives fades away, a disadvantage that could have been avoided had their input been channeled through an institution with vast human resources.

The relationship between the President and his close advisors is determined by a number of factors. To start with, political culture in Egypt has dictated a certain acceptable code of behavior in dealing with the president where submission to his wishes is the norm, disagreement is possible but not very frequent and overt opposition is unthinkable. So even though Mubarak is, generally speaking, a good listener and receptive to views that are different from his own, disagreeing with him has to be tackled with extreme caution. As one close aide to Mubarak told me, "I could present a different point of view on an issue only once. If he did not approve, I would refrain from raising my reservations on this issue again." Disapproving the vicious attacks on President Mubarak in opposition papers, the prestigious journalist and political analyst Mohamed Heikal, ironically himself a critic of the regime since the second half of Sadat's tenure, has argued that the seat of the president, despite any

differences, should always be addressed with respect and reverence. It may be argued that such an attitude derives predominantly from Egypt's enduring political culture where the leader, as previously discussed, is treated with utmost reverence. Hence, disagreement – albeit sanctioned – is checked by entrenched norms that perceive it, more or less, as tantamount to hostility and rudeness. Under Mubarak, the confines of discussion were probably further curtailed by the norms of the military milieu where he spent most of his professional life. It can be argued that in the mentality of officer corps, obeying the instructions of superiors is always a duty while presenting different opinions is seen as a sign of disloyalty. The prestigious journalist Salama Ahmed Salama explains:

"There [in Western states headed by former officers], they enter the political life from the start and get trained on political rationale. With time, they realize that politics is different from working in the military. And I think this chance did not come to any of Egypt's rulers, because they came from the military without getting used to the political life. *More accurately, they are used to giving orders that are obeyed and nobody would have the right to discuss them. Yes, they can consult, but not discuss or retreat.* In my opinion, this is the basic symptom of the political malady we are living up till now."[244] (Emphasis added)

In addition, the scope of differences of opinion is limited to the general framework within which policies are undertaken; upholding alternative views that diverge fundamentally from prevailing outlooks at the time is near-impossible. So, differences are constrained by the codes of style and content.

Furthermore, in a setting where institutions are weak and politics is the product of personal interaction, personal chemistry becomes of big importance. When it is absent, an aide of Mubarak told me, "parties become unwilling to communicate." He added that "chemistry makes me talk (with the president) at ease. Without it, my position is weakened and my ability to make initiatives decreases."

The power of the President and his assistants in the political system is another crucial factor in determining the boundaries of their relationship. In Egypt, the presidency is "the command post of the political system, a seat of enormous concentrated and personalized political power."[245] The President's ability to dismiss officials and his aides' noticeable lack of any constituency or power base further curtailed their capacity to challenge his authority. Aides, in short, are little more than employees, or 'secretaries' in the language of harsh critics,

whose position in the system does not entitle them to play independent roles, or clash with the presidency. Their survival in office, furthermore, is contingent upon the wishes of the President. So, their loyalty to the President becomes more important than their loyalty to the community of voters who did not bring them to office, as the case in established democracies.

Obviously, the President's wide constitutional powers add to his leverage. Sadat in 1971 was certainly weaker in crude power calculations than his rivals who controlled the armed forces, the internal security apparatus and the media. But Sadat owed his triumph to his office, and the great symbolic weight it carries in Egypt's centralized political system. The incident clearly attests to Sadat's rational-legal type of authority.

The structure of policy-making Mubarak designed facilitates control. Information and policy recommendations are provided to the president by a number of organs: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Intelligence, and the Military. The Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Economics do the same in their respected domains. According to a top official who worked with the President on a daily basis for years, Mubarak "prefers to act with aides individually." Meetings that bring together these institutions rarely take place, and horizontal cooperation among them is negligible, except for a limited scope between the Foreign Ministry and the Intelligence. Based on vertical lines of communication, this structure enables the President to be in command of the decision-making process and bolsters his capacity to exercise maximal control. Mubarak "always wants to remain in control. He does not delegate his authority to others. It is part of his character", said the same source.

This imbalanced structure confers on the president the capacity to keep and disclose information from his advisors as he sees fit. Sadat, a plotter by nature and background, was notorious for distrusting aides and belittling them. According to his Foreign Minister, Murad Ghaleb, Sadat deliberately kept him in the dark about important information and crucial decisions he was planning to make. In some cases, Sadat even deceived his own foreign minister; "he would tell heads of state something, and tell his foreign minister something totally different."[246] There is no evidence that Mubarak used such techniques with his assistants, though the possibility, theoretically speaking, is not ruled out.

All information and policy recommendations presented by the state's different agencies are directed at the President, who decides which advice to follow and which to disregard. In other words, it is he who assigns the different parties their weight in the decision-

making process. As a result, conflicts between different participants in the process are uncommon. This does not mean that such conflicts do not exist altogether. In fact, under Mubarak, the Minister of Foreign Affairs competed with the Ministry of Economics on managing the partnership negotiations with the European community.

Concomitantly, President Mubarak makes certain that no security agency dominates the information-gathering job. In order not to be dependent on one single body for information of a security nature, three different agencies do the job: The Ministry of Defense, The General Intelligence and the Ministry of Interior and there is good reason to believe that competition between these institutions is fostered from above. According to a retired general, "One of the givens in Egypt is that the chief of intelligence, the Minister of the Interior, and the Minister of Defense are meant to dislike one another. It's one of the ways that Mubarak manages to stay ahead of them."[247]

Furthermore, centralization, as usual, is relied upon to put these vital institutions under maximum control. For example, the Military Intelligence reports directly to the President and is, in effect, more attached to his office than to the Minister of Defense. The same applies to the State Security Intelligence.[248]

Other less-important institutions are excluded from the decision-making process. Pretty much like his predecessors, Mubarak made sure his cabinet is sidelined to foreign policy topics. The involvement of the cabinet is limited to attending to a review (made by the President or the Foreign Minister) on regional and international political developments as well as an explanation of Egypt's official position towards such developments. And this is limited to times of crises. The People's Assembly, likewise, hardly plays any role in the formation of foreign policy.

Needless to say, all potential rivals, real or imagined, to Mubarak's dominance of Egyptian politics were eliminated. In the 1980s, Defense Minister Field Marshall Mohamed Abdel-Halim Abu Ghazzala had developed a formidable power base in the military. He was in command of the army and was also believed to be staunchly pro-American[249], a combination that undoubtedly worries any Third World leader, as it demonstrates his capability to secure internal and external support if he stages a coup. Powerful, charismatic and ambitious, many came to see him as the natural heir of Mubarak. In an attempt to sideline a potential rival and isolate him from his power base, Mubarak offered Abu Ghazzala the vice-presidency,

provided he surrenders his ministerial post, but the offer was rejected.[250] In 1989, Abu Ghazzala was finally removed against the backdrop of involvement in an attempt to smuggle materials from the US for a program of developing missiles undertaken in collaboration with Argentina. Since then, Mubarak made sure that no 'Abu-Ghazzala type' is ever responsible for the military establishment. Defense ministers appointed since then were of the loyal type and neither had extraordinary personalities nor any political ambitions.

Amr Moussa is another good example. For some time, it seemed that the regime took advantage of the wide popularity and appeal Moussa enjoyed among Egyptians. For example, a television debate Moussa had conducted with Israeli Foreign Minister Shlomo Ben-Ami was broadcast more than three times on national television. Moussa excelled in the debate and embarrassed his counterpart. In Egypt, as in the rest of the Arab world, attacking Israel is the fastest ticket to stardom and recognition, so the government did not miss the opportunity to appease the public and add more points to its scant legitimacy account. There also seemed to be a division of roles, where Mubarak adopts a mild tone and Moussa is given the right to adopt harsh stances and engage in confrontations, in particular vis-à-vis Israel, but Moussa certainly overplayed it. He clashed verbally with Jordan's Monarch, President Bill Clinton and Secretary of State Madelyn Albright during a summit held in Sharm Al-Sheikh. According to a source that was close to decision-making circles, "When Moussa was unimpressed [with something the Americans had to say] he did not hide it".[251] This and some of his extravagant public announcements annoyed Mubarak who felt that a change of faces would be useful and Ahmed Maher was chosen. According to the same source, "Maher is a mild-natured man, and choosing him seems to indicate that Cairo would perhaps like to adopt a milder tone".[252] Still, many argue that the honeymoon with Moussa was bound to end anyway when Mubarak, by instinct, sensed that the former's popularity and passion crossed acceptable limits. So the official endorsement of Moussa to the prestigious position at the Arab League was perceived more as a demotion than a promotion.

A third example is Kamal Al-Ganzoury, Egypt's Prime Minister from 1996 to 1999. Al-Ganzoury attempted to control the huge bureaucratic machinery by heading dozens of committees and governmental agencies and encroaching upon the jurisdiction of other ministers and officials. He also clashed with a number of journalists, whom he thought were going beyond the acceptable limits of self-expression. The endeavor to concentrate power in

his hands irritated the political leadership. No wonder thus that Al-Ganzoury stayed in office for only three years, a record for prime ministers working with Mubarak.

On the other hand, individuals who are known to have no political ambitions have been granted an extra asset. The contrast between the fates of Abu-Ghazzala and Omar Soliman, both powerful men with influence in the security organs, is a case in point.

Competition between State Institutions:

Disputes between institutions take place most often not based on differences in policies but on defining jurisdictions. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs frequently clashed with the Ministry of Economy on the right to manage Egypt's partnership negotiations with the European Union. Under the leadership of Amr Moussa, the Foreign Ministry became quite aggressive in defending its boundaries vis-à-vis other ministries. Many in the state were not content with this, thinking that Moussa envisaged a role to the ministry that is higher than what it merits and even beyond its capabilities.

In the 1980s, many major foreign policy files were taken over by Osama Al-Baz, Mubarak's chief political advisor. The very classical, non-confrontational and low-key Essmat Abdel-Meguid, theoretically in charge of foreign affairs, did not object. According to a senior diplomat who had worked with four different foreign ministers under Mubarak, Abdel-Meguid is "the type of person who would not fight for his rights. He would not be going to make an issue out of it." In the same vein, Abdel-Meguid was not attentive to the importance of the media to policy-making in today's world, and was, therefore, overshadowed by the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, who - only in charge of Africa and Latin America but far more visible on the public level - appeared to be more influential. The advent of Amr Moussa to the ministry in 1991 put an end to Al-Baz's dominance of foreign affairs, though his involvement in policy-making remained paramount. Contrary to Abdel-Maguid, Moussa was intent on giving the ministry more weight in the decision-making process and he was a master in the media game.

Moussa sought to marginalize his rivals, asserts a renowned scholar: "He wanted to be the sole spokesman for Egypt's foreign policy, instead of Al-Baz and Al-Sharif."[253] Also, Moussa and Al-Baz often disagreed on policies, and the intensity of these disagreements increased in the last few years of Moussa'a tenure. Less confrontational than Moussa, and

more concerned about the ramifications of Egypt's policies on its relationship with the United States, Al-Baz adopted a more conciliatory tone. To be sure, such differences are balanced from above by the President. Even though it would be an exaggeration to predict that these differences undermined the process of foreign-policy making, it is similarly erroneous to overlook their existence altogether.

It could be argued that the influence of players in the policy-making game is dependent on a number of factors. One is related to personal attributes, in particular their insistence on asserting their power vis-à-vis other institutions and the extent to which they are ready to make concessions to fellow officials. Another factor is the overall power these players enjoy in the state, which is derived from the institution they are representing and the period of time they have been in power. As a former minister pointed out to me, "the longer you stay in power, the more you are in command."[254] According to these parameters, the power, for example, of Safwat Al-Sherif is owed to the importance of his post (Minister of Information) in addition to the long time he spent in charge (twenty-one years).

The Role of the Public Opinion

The input of the public opinion in the decision-making process is rather minimal for a number of reasons. First, public opinion has, in general, been supportive of Mubarak's foreign policy, in particular during the first decade of his rule when a number of successes were obtained, like ending Egypt's isolation in the Arab world, the return of Taba and, in general, putting an end to Sadat's eccentric style in running Egypt's relations with friends and foes.

Second, the public, one should not forget, is - generally speaking - far less interested in foreign policy issues compared to internal politics. Having to cope with numerous economic and social hardships, Egyptians, unexceptionally, tend to focus on their most immediate needs and leave the discussions of politics, ideology and foreign policy to a small percentage of intellectuals and scholars. To them, prices of basic foodstuff, availability of jobs and the quality of public services are a great deal more important issues than, say, Egypt's relationship with the United States, or its stature in the Arab world.

Furthermore, foreign policy issues are hardly on the agenda of political parties. Their electoral programs focus on socioeconomic issues and give little attention to international politics. Their publications touch excessively on corruption charges, the deterioration of

public services and governmental inefficiency in dealing with Egypt's malaise and scarcely on issues of foreign policy, defense and national security. Intellectuals, on their part, are locked in their secluded ivory towers, such as universities and think tanks. Their influence on the public mood, let alone politicians, is small. Many, moreover, are co-opted by the state.

Third, presidential power in Egypt is much easier to wield in foreign policy than in domestic policy in both its political and economic wings. Internally, resistance from inside the state machinery could often hamper decisions taken from above. The process of economic privatization was faced with fierce resistance from state employees whose interests were not served by the process of privatization. Their defiance compelled the government to slow down the process and think of ways to appease them.

Also, unpopular decisions could, at times, be reversed. Journalists, for example, managed to improve the terms of the new Press Law issued in 2006 whose earlier version limited the freedom of the press. The new law, still, conformed for the most part to the wishes of the government, but the protests of journalists managed to alter some of the law's most unpopular articles. But the dynamics of foreign policy-making are less prone to differences and overt conflict, for whereas the interests of professionals, be they engineers, physicians, journalists, workers or peasants can be advanced by their respective guilds, foreign policy has no organized body to supervise and monitor the government's performance.

Fourth, the rulers of Egypt, in effect, shape the public opinion more than are constrained by it. In command of the media apparatus in a country whose literacy rate is considerably low, leaders have the leverage to propagate official policies, lessen public opposition to unpopular governmental stances, and, if needed, shift the attention away to less embarrassing issues with a significant degree of success. This is why when, during the Camp David negotiations, Sadat argued that Egypt's public opinion would not let him make concessions, Israel's Prime Minister Begin convincingly responded by saying that "the people of Egypt could be easily manipulated by Sadat, and their beliefs and attitudes could be shaped by their leader."[255] Begin proceeded by explaining how Sadat managed to convince his people that the Soviets were Egypt's best friends only to later depict them as its worst enemy.

Perhaps the influence of public opinion on policy appears at the time of regional crises, particularly Arab-Israeli confrontations. Given the populace's deep animosity to Israel and the latter's often excessive aggressiveness vis-à-vis fellow Arabs in Palestine and Lebanon,

popular outbursts frequently occur which - in the eyes of Mubarak -represent a formidable threat to the stability of the regime. In the age of satellite technology, Arab news networks have excelled in revealing to the whole Arab nation the extent of destruction and havoc Israel's war machine has caused to Arab brethren. Indeed, nothing can better mobilize Arab masses than images of Arab blood broadcast from the site of a massacre perpetrated by the Jewish state. At such moments, the Egyptian government realizes that, in order to prevent an escalation of tension and to maintain stability and order, it has to bridge the gap between official policy and public temperament. Following this logic, the Egyptian ambassador to Israel was withdrawn twice; in the aftermath of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 and after the eruption of the second Palestinian 'Intifada' in 2000. Also, Egypt initially responded to the Israeli war on Lebanon in the summer of 2006 by denouncing Hizbullah's "uncalculated adventures" and their negative impact on Arab interests, but the massive public support to Hizbullah and its leader required a change of position. Sometimes, the official stance even outbids its public counterpart.

Nonetheless, such influence on policy is circumscribed by two main factors. First, its nature is temporary; as soon as passion dissipates, a return to regular policies and discourses ensues. Second, the change in policy it produces is cosmetic in character, most often limited to rhetoric and symbolic gestures; the essence of politics remains on the whole untouched. One has also to remember that in the aforementioned cases, the public's stance did not diverge much from the official line espoused by its government, for, in cases of Israeli aggression, Egypt publicly denounced Israel's behavior and called for self-restraint and a return to the negotiating table.

The crucial difference in these cases lies in the high expectations of people that go beyond the ability – and desire – of politicians. Under the passion of charged situations, people's demands range from abrogating the peace treaty with Israel and opening the borders in front of volunteers to engaging with Israel militarily. In other cases when a clear difference occurs between the state's outlook and that embraced by its subjects, the latter is clearly unable to alter the choices of the former. The Gulf War is a good case in point. Joining the coalition led by the United States to liberate Kuwait (and destroy Iraq's civil and military infrastructure) was condemned by large segments of the population, who accused the Egyptian state of infidelity and betrayal.

At these difficult times, dust is being removed from ideologies forgotten for long, particularly Islam, which are shrewdly used by the state to mute public criticism. So as the language of Islam in foreign policy increased during the Gulf crisis, policies - in essence - became more pro-Western. Saddam Hussein was described in the Egyptian official media as a traitor to Islam and Arabism, for he swallowed the land of a fellow Muslim and Arab state. Also, safeguarding the holy Islamic sites in Saudi Arabia was depicted as the 'duty' of all Muslims. In other words, "moments of legitimacy crisis increase Islamic rationalization of foreign policy."[256] Undoubtedly, this use of ideology augments the capacity of the state with regards to angry reactions to detested policies.

Another factor as to the impact of public opinion on policy, as Telhami explains, is "issue importance"[257]. It is worthy within this context to note that Egyptian diplomacy played an active role in the defending of Muslim rights against the Danish newspaper, which published cartoons that depicted Prophet Mohamed as a terrorist wearing a bomb-shaped turban. The position entailed some sort of opportunism, for no similar attitude would have emerged had the same cartoons been published in the U.S. or Britain, countries of strategic importance to the Egyptian regime. On some minor issues, one can conclude, Egypt can afford to use ideology to serve its interests without incurring losses, but in many others, the importance of the issue to grand national interests dictates submission to the rules of *realpolitik.*

Conclusion

Since time immemorial, rulers in Egypt have been near deities. The pharaoh was the state and the state was him. Modern constitutions have consolidated this tendency by granting them draconian powers. As a result, the leader enjoys tremendous freedom in decision-making without being held accountable by any institution. The result is a decision-making process that is heavily influenced by the leader's character and personal traits.

Mubarak is principally a cautious man who would avoid gambling or embarking on risky ventures. Instead, his main objective lies in staying in power. His "genius is not for grand gestures. It's for riding the waves of a turbulent region and emerging on top"[258]. Mubarak's lack of a vision along with his deep obsession with personal and regime security had a great impact on the way policies - internal and foreign - were formulated and executed.

Other institutions, such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the military establishment and the Intelligence, play a negligible role in the process; their role is limited to gathering information in the pre-decision stage and implementing the president's orders in the post-decision stage. Business associations, moreover, are too weak and fragmented to shape foreign policy decisions. Mubarak is therefore the '*Sayyid*' (the sovereign); he does not have to justify himself.

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[1]Shaheen Ayubi, *Nasser and Sadat: Decision Making and Foreign Policy, 1970-1972* (Maryland: University Press of America, 1994), 7.

[2]Ibid.

[3]David Roberts, *The Ba'th and the Creation of Modern Syria* (London: Croom Helm, 1987), 44.

[4]Cited in Azza Ezzat, *The Image of the President* (Cairo: Markaz Al-Hadara Al-Arabiya, 2005), 172-3. Many of these factors defied time. In the early twentieth century, Edward Dicey wrote that the government of Khedive Ismail was:

"an absolute personal despotism. His will was the law. His ministers were appointed at his pleasure, dismissed at his pleasure, and were regarded by him and by his people as clerks whose sole function and duty was to carry out their master's orders to his own satisfaction…if anybody, high or low, great or small, famous or infamous, crossed Ismail's path or stood in Ismail's way he crushed the offender with merciless severity."

Still, Dicey admits that Ismail's omnipotence was limited by three factors: his subservience to the Ottoman Sultan, his deference to Islam in fear of public retaliation and his respect for the powerful European community in Alexandria. (Edward Dicey, *The Egypt of the Future* (London: William Heinemann, 1907), 159-161).

Some of the list still resonates today. For instance, Mubarak declined Ayman Nour's call for a public debate during the presidential elections campaign in August 2005. Dia Rashwan, an analyst with Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, explains: Egypt's rulers "don't tolerate opposition". It "is a matter of pride for them." (Barry Rubin, "Grading Mubarak," *The Jerusalem Post*, 1 January 2006, http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1136102653210&pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FShowll.) In fact, personal criticism is perceived by rulers as an insult. It is widely-believed in Cairo that the civil rights academic Saad Eddin Ibrahim was tried and jailed because of his open criticism of Egypt becoming another '*gumlukiya*' (hereditary republic) like Syria. Moreover, the media portrays the president as sinless, and the majority of laymen, actually, perceive him as such. Also, the constitution gives the president the right to decree laws if he so wishes.

[5]Adeed Dawisha, *Egypt in the Arab World: The Elements of Foreign Policy* (London: Macmillan, 1976), 103.

[6]Adeed Dawisha, "Arab Regimes: Legitimacy and Foreign Policy," in *The Arab State*, ed. Giacomo Luciani (London: Routledge, 1990), 287.

[7]Ibid., p. 288.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Ayubi, *Nasser and Sadat*, 10.

[10]His full name is Abu-Zayed Abdul-Rahman Ibn Mohamed Ibn Khaldoun Al-Hadrami. He is considered as one of the pioneers of sociology, historiography and economics. His most famous work is 'Al-Muqaddimah' (Prolegomena).

[11]Ayubi, *Nasser and Sadat*, 10.

[12]Fouad Ajami, *The Arab Predicament: Arab Political Thought and Practice Since 1967* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1981), 96.

[13]Ayubi, *Nasser and Sadat*, 10. Farouk found out differently, so did Sadat thirty years later, but the perceptions of the political elite did not change. Many of the scholars interviewed in the course of this inquiry confirmed that the political elite sees no difference between its own interest and the public interest.

[14]Dawisha, *Egypt in the Arab World*, 122.

[15]Ibid.

[16]Ibid.

[17]Mohamed Hassanein Heikal, "Egyptian Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs* 56 (July 1978): 714.

[18]Gamal Ali Zahran, *Egypt's Foreign Policy, 1970-1981* (Cairo: Madbuli, 1987), 233.

[19]Mohamed Youssef Amer, *Egypt Between the Superpowers: Continuity and Change in Egyptian Foreign Policy Under Mubarak* (California: Naval Postgraduate School, 1984), 21.

[20]Gamal Ali Zahran, *Who Rules Egypt? A Study in Political Decision-Making in Egypt and the Third World* (Cairo: n.p., 1993), 128.

[21]Quoted in Dawisha, *Egypt in the Arab World*, 98.

[22]Mohamed Hassanein Heikal, *Autumn of Fury* (Beirut: Markaz Al-Matbuat liltawzi walnashr, 1986), 189.

[23]"The Leader, the Man of Maneuvers and the Administrator," *Al-Arabi*, 4 July 2005.

[24]Heikal, *Autumn of Fury*, 189.

[25]Ashraf Ghorbal, *The Rise and Fall of Egyptian-American Relations: Secret Communications with Nasser and Sadat* (Cairo: Al-Ahram Center for Translation and Publishing, 2004), 191-2.

[26]Article 85 of the 1971 constitution stipulates that the President can be impeached in the case of treason or committing a felony. However, two-thirds of the People's Assembly should first propose it and then two-thirds should approve the accusation before impeachment can take place (Mohamed Al-Tawil, *How are Decisions Made in Egypt?* (Cairo: n.p., 1993), 13).

[27]Sadat had occasionally "took crucial decisions in defiance of elite opinion and in disregard of professional military and diplomatic advice". (Raymond Hinnebusch, "The Foreign Policy of Egypt," in *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States*, ed. Raymond Hinnebusch and Anoushiravan Ehteshami (Boulder & London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002), 99) The momentous decision to go to Jerusalem in spite of the opposition of his Foreign Minister (Ismail Fahmy) and the deliberate exclusion of his advisors in the Sinai I and Sinai II negotiations are two cases in point. Moreover, his advisors, at best, had a vague idea of his real political plans. Just one day before leaving for Camp David, his security council and Foreign Minister only received a verbal notice of his negotiating strategy. (Mohamed Ibrahim Kamel, *The Lost Peace in the Camp David Accords* (Damascus: Dar Tlas, n.d.), 470)

[28]Ali E. Hillal Dessouki, "The Primacy of Economics: The Foreign Policy of Egypt," in *The Foreign Policies of Arab States: The Challenge of Change*, ed. Bahgat Korany and Ali E. Hillal Dessouki (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), 169.

[29]Ibid., p. 168.

[30]Ibid.

[31]Dawisha, *Egypt in the Arab World*, 121.

[32]Louis Cantori, "Egypt at the Crossroads: Domestic, Economic and Political Stagnation and Foreign Policy Constraints," in *The Middle East and the Peace Process: The Impact of the Oslo Accords*, ed. Robert O. Freedman (Florida: University Press of Florida, 1998), 159; Ali E. Hillal Dessouki, "The Primacy of Economics: The Foreign Policy of Egypt", 1991, 164.

[33]Fouad Ajami, "The Battle for Egypt's Soul," *US News & World Report*, 27 June 1994. Available from Academic Search Premier.

[34]Ajami, *The Arab Predicament: Arab Political Thought and Practice since 1967*, 80.

[35]Dessouki, "The Primacy of Economics: The Foreign Policy of Egypt", 1991, 167.

[36]Shibley Zeki Telhami, "A Theory of Egypt's Regional Policy: The Case of Camp David," *American Arab Affairs* no. 33 (Summer 1990): 112. (Quoted from Ezer Weisman's memoirs *Battle for Peace*)

[37]Amer, *Egypt between the Superpowers*, 23.

[38]Joseph Lorenz, *Egypt and the Arabs: Foreign Policy and the Search for National Identity* (Boulder, San Francisco and Oxford: Westview Press, 1990), 109.

[39]Shibley Telhami, "Arab Public Opinion and the Gulf War," *Political Science Quarterly* 108, no. 3 (Fall 1993): 447.

[40]It is interesting to note that Egyptian rulers across different regimes shared an apprehension about the potential emergence of regional hegemons. King Farouk in the late 1940s, Nasser in the late 1950s and Mubarak in the late 1980s were alarmed by the rise of Iraq in the Arab state system. The current expansion of Iranian influence in the Middle East is, likewise, not welcomed in Cairo. So even though Mubarak does not really aspire to lead the Arab world, he does not acquiesce in a non-Egyptian leadership. Geopolitical realities are, predominately, the driving force behind this resemblance.

[41]Salua Nour and Carl Pinkele, "Camp David and After: Foreign Policy in an Interdependent Environment," in *The Contemporary Mediterranean World*, ed. Carl F. Pinkele and Adamantia Pollis (New York: Praeger, 1983), 264.

[42]Mohamed Al-Sayed Selim, "The July Revolution and Egypt's External Role," *Al-Siyassa Al-Dawliya* 37 (July 2002): 19.

[43]Dawisha, *Egypt in the Arab World*, 164.

[44]Bahgat Korany, personal communication, n.d., Cairo, written notes, The American University in Cairo, Cairo.

[45]One of three major reasons Khaled el-Islambuli mentioned as to why he decided to assassinate Sadat was that "he made peace with the Jews" (Shawqi Khaled, *The Trial of the Pharaoh: The Secrets of Sadat Killers' Trial* (Cairo: Sina lilnashr, 1986), 51.).

[46]Ayubi, *Nasser and Sadat*, 11.

[47]Ibid., p. 12.

[48]Ibid., p. 14.

[49]Murad Ghaleb, interview by author, 15 December 2004, Cairo, tape recording, Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Organization (AAPSO), Cairo.

[50]Heikal, "Egyptian Foreign Policy": 714.

[51]Dessouki, "The Primacy of Economics: The Foreign Policy of Egypt", 1991, 166.

[52]Dawisha, *Egypt in the Arab World*, 111.

[53]Ibid.

[54]Hinnebusch, "The Foreign Policy of Egypt", 103.

[55]Ajami, *The Arab Predicament*, 83.

[56]Dawisha, *Egypt in the Arab World*, 109.

[57]Ibid.

[58]Ibid.

[59]Sadat wrote the following about Nasser: "Alongside his shyness and quiet disposition, he had a typical Saidi [Upper Egyptian] personality. He was tender and loyal, full of compassion…But he quickly turned into a ferocious lion the moment he felt that anyone even simply thought of insulting or hurting him". (P.J. Vatikiotis, *Nasser and his Generation* (London: Croom Helm, 1978), 25)

[60]Mohamed Hassanein Heikal, *1967: The Explosion* (Cairo: Al-Ahram Center for Publishing and Translation, 1990), 124-6.

[61]Dawisha, *Egypt in the Arab World*, 109-110.

[62]Ajami, *The Arab Predicament*, 111.

[63]Heikal, *Autumn of Fury*, 35.

[64]Kamel, *The Lost Peace in the Camp David Accords*, 192.

[65]Ibid., 191.

[66]Ibid., 189-90.

[67]Ajami, *The Arab Predicament*, 111-2.

[68]Ahmed Bahaa El-Din, *Dialogues with Sadat* (Cairo: Dar al-Hillal, 1987), 156.

[69]Ibid., 168.

[70]Kamel, *The Lost Peace in the Camp David Accords*, 194.

[71]Bahaa El-Din, *Dialogues with Sadat*, 76.

[72]Kamel, *The Lost Peace in the Camp David Accords*, 196.

[73]Heikal, *Autumn of Fury*, 103; Kamel, *The Lost Peace I n the Camp David Accords*, 197.

[74]Heikal, *Autumn of Fury*, 103.

[75]Kamel, *The Lost Peace in the Camp David Accords*, 195.

[76]Derek Hopwood, *Egypt: Politics and Society, 1945-1990* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), 184; Daniel Sobelman, Daniel, "Gamal Mubarak, President of Egypt?," *Middle East Quarterly* VIII, no.2 (Spring 2001): http://www.meforum.org/article/27; Website of the Egyptian Presidency (http://presidency.gov.eg/html/the_president.html).

[77]Fouad Ajami, "The Sorrows of Egypt," *Foreign Affairs* 74 (September / October 1995): http://www.foreignaffairs.org/19950901faessay5066/fouad-ajami/the-sorrows-of-egypt-a-tale-of-two-men.html?mode=print.

[78]Ibid.

[79]P.J. Vatikiotis, *The History of Modern Egypt: From Muhammad Ali to Mubarak* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1991), 443.

[80]Amer, *Egypt Between the Superpowers*, 29.

[81]Hopwood, *Egypt: Politics and Society*, 185.

[82]Ajami, "The Battle for Egypt's Soul.".

[83]Robert Springborg, *Mubarak's Egypt: Fragmentation of the Political Order* (Boulder & London: Westview Press, 1989), 26.

[84]Nevine Khalil, "Steering a Steady Course," *Al-Ahram Weekly*, 11 October 2001, http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2001/555/fe1.htm.

[85]Ajami, "The Sorrows of Egypt".

[86]Glenn Frankel, "Egyptians Begin Asking: After Mubarak, What?" *The Washington Post*, 17 December 2003.

[87]Gamal Zahran, interview by author, 26 April 2006, Cairo, tape recording, Heliopolis, Cairo.

[88]Ahmed Al-Sayed Al-Naggar, interview by author, 8 March 2006, Cairo, tape recording, Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, Cairo.

[89]Louis Cantori, "Egypt Reenters the Arab State System," in *The Middle East From the Iran-Contra Affair to the Intifada*, ed. Robert O. Freedman (Syracuse: Syracuse UP, 1990), 344.

[90]Louis Cantori, "Egyptian Policy Under Mubarak: The Politics of Continuity and Change," in *The Middle East After the Israeli Invasion of Lebanon*, ed. Robert Freedman (Syracuse: Syracuse UP, 1986), 333.

[91]Dessouki, "The Primacy of Economics: The Foreign Policy of Egypt", 157.

[92]Zahran, *Who Rules Egypt*, 126.

[93]Ibid.

[94]Ibid., p. 127.

[95]Osama Al-Baz, interview by author, 17 August 2006, Cairo, written notes, The Diplomatic Institute, Cairo.

[96]Ibid.

[97]Zahran, *Who Rules Egypt*, 161.

[98]Khalil, "Steering a Steady Course".

[99]Hopwood, *Egypt: Politics and Society*, 184.

[100]Vatikiotis, *The History of Modern Egypt*, 455.

[101]An academic study analyzing the decision to reestablish full diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union concluded that the timing of the decision was somehow late and that this delay lessened the positive results of the decision. (Zahran, *Who Rules Egypt*, 129-137)

[102]Hopwood, *Egypt: Politics and Society*, 192.

[103]Galal Amin, "Whither Egypt?," *Al-Mustaqbal Al-Arabi* 23, no. 255 (May 2000): 13.

[104]Saeed Shoeib, *Whither Egypt?* (Cairo: Maktabat Madbuli, 2005), 219.

[105]Mubarak spent his whole life in the armed forces. In an interview with the Egyptian television conducted in summer 2005, he said that when he was summoned for a meeting with Sadat in 1975, his wildest expectations were that he would be appointed as an ambassador to London. Sadat shocked him with choosing him as Vice-President.

[106]Ajami, "The Sorrows of Egypt".

[107]Jon B. Alterman, "Egypt: Stable, but for How Long?," *The Washington Quarterly* 23, no. 4 (Autumn 2000): 109.

[108]Ajami, "The Sorrows of Egypt".

[109]Ephraim Dowek, *Israeli-Egyptian Relations, 1980-2000* (London: Frank Cass, 2001), 290.

[110]Amer, *Egypt Between the Superpowers*, 113.

[111]Hopwood, *Egypt: Politics and Society*, 187.

[112]Bahgat Korany, personal communication, n.d., Cairo, written notes, The American University in Cairo, Cairo.

[113]Mohamed Hassanein Heikal, *The Gulf War: Illusions of Power and Triumph* (Cairo: Al-Ahram Center for Translation and Publishing, 1992), 374.

[114]In a speech addressing journalists of the Third World in February 1983, Mubarak said that "he does not like the 'electric-shock' style". (Zahran. *Who Rules Egypt*, 165)

[115]Mohamed Wahby, interview by author, 3 January 2005, Cairo, written notes, Maadi, Cairo.

[116]Mohamed Hassanein Heikal, *Dialogues on the Crisis* (Cairo: Dar Al-Husam, 1997), 64.

[117]Springborg, *Mubarak's Egypt*, 27.

[118]Amany Radwan, "Mubarak's Dynasty," *Time Europe*, 17 November 2000, http://www.time.com/time/europe/magazine/2000/1127/mubarak.html.

[119]Dennis Ross was director for policy planning in the State Department under President George H.W. Bush and special Middle East coordinator under President Bill Clinton.

[120]Dennis Ross, "Egypt's New Role," *The Washington Post*, 2 July 2004, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A22192-2004Jul1.html.

[121]Tamara Wittes, "Hosni Mubarak: Elections or No, He's Still Pharaoh," Slate, 3 March 2005, http://slate.msn.com/id/2114319/.

[122]Vatikiotis, *The History of Modern Egypt*, 445.

[123]Ibid.

[124]Fouad Ajami, *The Dream Palace of the Arabs: A Generation's Odyssey* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1998), 202.

[125]Alterman, "Egypt: Stable, but for How Long?", 108.

[126]Ibid.

[127]Said Aburish, "The coming Arab Crash," *The Guardian*, 18 October 2001, http://www.guardian.co.uk/print/0,3858,4279609-103677,00.html.

[128]More than 17,000 Islamic fundamentalists were detained between 1989 and 1997 and 74 civilians were sentenced to death by military courts in the period from 1992 to 1996. (Alterman, "Egypt: Stable, but for How Long?", 110.)

[129]Other statistics estimated that at the peak of confrontations between the state and Islamic militants, "one Egyptian a day was dying in the war against the Islamists." ("The Retreat from Fundamentalism," *The Economist*, 1 May 1999.)

[130]Mohamed Hassanein Heikal, *1995: Egypt's Gate to the Twenty First Century* (Cairo: Dar Al-Shorooq, 1995), 28.

[131]This attempt took place at the time Mubarak's motorcade was on the way to Port Said. The official statement of the President's office said that while Mubarak was "waving to the crowd from his car window, a man approached the motorcade holding a sharp instrument, causing a light injury to the president." The assailant was immediately shot dead by Mubarak's security guards. Egypt's official press claimed he had exhibited "unstable behavior" and "psychotic disorder". (Sobelman, "Gamal Mubarak, President of Egypt?")

[132]Plans to kill Mubarak in 1992 and 1993 were aborted by the security agencies before the plotters could take action (Bruce Nelan, "A Near Miss, This Time," *Time*, 10 July 1995, http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,983145-1,00.html). The 1993 attempt was uncovered when a member of Al-Gamaa Al-Islamiya was detained during a random raid. He confessed that the group was planning to assassinate the president by attacking his plane at the Sidi Barrani airport (Joseph Kechichian and Jeanne Nazimek, "Challenges to the Military in Egypt," *Middle East Policy* 5, no. 3 (September 1997): 130).

[133]Abdel Monem Said and Robert Pelletreau, "U.S.-Egyptian Relations," *Middle East Policy* VIII, no. 2 (June 2001): 48.

[134]"Head of the National Coalition of Change Calls on Mubarak to Force Big Thieves to Return Money to the Public," *Al-Quds Al-Arabi*, 6 January 2006).

[135]For security considerations, President Mubarak has declined since 1995 to attend the meetings of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), including the latest round held in Khartoum in January 2006 (Khalil, "Steering a Steady Course").

[136]Ali Hillal Dessouki, "Managing Ambivalence: Egypt's Changing Regional Environment," in *Egypt at the Crossroads: Domestic Stability and Regional Role*, ed. Phebe Marr (Hawaii: University Press of the Pacific, 1999), 194.

[137]Said and Pelletreau, "U.S.-Egyptian Relations", 49.

[138]Hopwood, *Egypt: Politics and Society*, 193.

[139]Amira Elbendary, "The Future is Now," *Al-Ahram Weekly*, 17 October 2002, http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2002/608/eg5.htm.

[140]See Hamied Ansari, *The Stalled Society* (Albany: Suny Press, 1986).

[141]See Robert Springborg, *Mubarak's Egypt: Fragmentation of the Political Order* (Boulder & London: Westview Press, 1989).

[142]Dan Murphy, "Egypt Keeps New Parties on Short Leash," *The Christian Science Monitor*, 21 October 2004, http://www.csmonitor.com/2004/1021/p06s02-wome.html.

[143]Christopher Dickey, "Egypt: Key to the Mideast," *Newsweek (International Edition)*, 21 June 2004, http://msnbc.com/id/5197854/site/newsweek.

[144]Nir Boms and Michael Meunier, "Reforms, Freedom in Egypt," *The Washington Times*, 4 November 2004, http://www.aina.org/news/20041104100707.htm.

[145]Mohamed Al-Sayed Selim, interview by author, 15 August 2005, Cairo, tape recording, Center of Asian Studies, Cairo University, Cairo.

[146]Samer Soliman, *Strong Regime, Weak State: Managing the Fiscal Crisis and Political Change under Mubarak* (Cairo: Dar Merit, 2005), 272.

[147]Not only did the budget of the Ministry of Interior increase as a whole vis-à-vis other ministries, but the budget of the ministry itself was more concentrated in the sectors that deal with maintaining public order and combating political dissent (like the Central Security Forces, State Security Intelligence…etc) at the expense of the sectors that deal with apolitical crimes. The natural result was a noticeable increase in the rates of crime in Egypt.

[148]Soliman, *Strong Regime, Weak State*, 84-92.

[149]Ibid., p. 93.

[150]Louise Lief, "The Battle for Egypt," *US News & World Report*, 19 July 1993, Available from Academic Search Premier.

[151]Boms and Meunier, "Reforms, Freedom in Egypt".

[152]Ibid.

[153]Barbara Slavin, "Egypt's Mubarak 'Doesn't Take Risks'," *USA Today*, 6 June 2002, http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2002/06/06/mubarak-usat.htm.

[154]Ajami, "The Battle for Egypt's Soul.". It is fair to note that stagnation is not limited to Egypt, but rather a feature of most Arab countries. According to the Arab Human Development Report (issued in 2004), Arab states have turned into "black hole states in which rulers are granted unchallengeable powers so as to convert the surrounding social environment into a setting in which nothing moves and from which nothing escapes." (Quoted in Kareem Kamel, "Simmering Discontent: The Persistence of Popular Protest in Egypt," *Islamonline.net*, 23 May 2005, http://www.islamonline.net/servlet/Satellite?c=Article_C&cid=1156077727241&pagename=Zone-English-Muslim_Affairs%2FMAELayout.) But the immobility of Egyptian politics remains unique in the Arab context due to Mubarak's swollen obsession with security.

[155]Zahran, *Who Rules Egypt*, 127.

[156]Ibid., 128.

[157]Ibid., 167.

[158]Miret Naggar, "Egypt Officially Opens Sadat Museum," *Knight Ridder*, 17 February 2006.

[159]Shibley Telhami, *Power and Leadership in International Bargaining: The Path to the Camp David Accords* (New York: Columbia UP, 1990), 175.

[160]Ibid., 177.

[161]Those who worked with Sadat closely noticed his disinterest in observing and discussing details. For instance, his Foreign Minister, Mohamed Ibrahim Kamel, concluded that "Sadat was too lazy to deal with detail. He never read reports, and never displayed interest." Also, Boutrus-Ghali said that "Sadat had no interest in detail whatsoever." (Quoted in Ibid)

[162]Mohamed Hassanein Heikal, *October 1973: Arms and Politics* (Cairo: Al-Ahram Center for Translation and Publishing, 1993), 675.

[163]Springborg, *Mubarak's Egypt*, 24. Springborg relegates his lack of political involvement to his "lack of sociability". Mubarak, explains Sprinborg, "is a private person who prefers the structured environment of the workplace to less formal social settings." (Ibid.) In the same vein, Maria Golia calls him 'the remote father' for his remoteness and for maintaining a low profile throughout twenty-four years of his presidency. She wrote: "Mubarak was never much for fraternizing…he was more the strong silent type, not mysterious but remote, someone you respected for his low profile, especially in contrast to the flamboyant spendthrift Sadat." (Maria Golia, "Egypt's Election, or the Triumph of the Remote Father," *The Daily Star*, 13 September 2005.).

[164]Hopwood, *Egypt: Politics and Society*, 187.

[165]Dessouki, "Managing Ambivalence: Egypt's Changing Regional Environment", 194.

[166]"Interview of President Mubarak with Kuwaiti Newspaper Al-Rai Al-Aam," Website of the Egyptian State Information Service, http://www.sis.gov.eg/Ar/Politics/PInstitution/President/Interview/000001/040101030000000000148.htm

[167]Quoted in Gregory Aftandilian, *Egypt's Bid for Arab Leadership: Implications for US Policy* (New York: Council of Foreign Relations Press, 1993), 21.

[168]Quoted in Louis Cantori, "Unipolarity and Egyptian Hegemony in the Middle East," in *The Middle East After Iraq's Invasion of Kuwait*, ed. Robert Freedman (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1993), 347.

[169]"The Leader, the Man of Maneuvers and the Administrator".

[170]Abdallah Al-Sinawy, interview by author, 1 August 2006, Cairo, written notes, Al-Araby Newspaper, Cairo.

[171]"The Leader, the Man of Maneuvers and the Administrator".

[172]Dowek, *Israeli-Egyptian Relations*, 290.

[173]Galal Amin, *Describing Egypt at the End of the Twentieth Century* (Cairo: Dar Al-Shorooq, 2000), 182-187.

[174]Springborg, *Mubarak's Egypt*, 26. Mubarak's limited expertise in politics and economics was even noticed by his people; jokes in Egypt often touched on his "dimwittedness". (Wittes, "Hosni Mubarak: Elections or No, He's Still Pharaoh").

[175]Springborg, *Mubarak's Egypt*, 27.

[176]Abdel Monem Said, "Trends of Reform in Egypt," *Al-Ahram*, 3 June 2003, http://www.ahram.org.eg/archive/Index.asp?CurFN=FILE4.HTM&DID=7775.

[177]Lee Smith, "Egypt After Mubarak," Slate, 9 July 2004, http://slate.msn.com/id/2103651/.

[178]Quoted in "Ghali Raises Controversy about Authority in Egypt," *Al-Arabiya.net*, 23 June 2005, http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2005/06/23/14250.html.

[179]Ibid.

[180]Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *In Waiting of the Full Moon* (Cairo: Dar Al-Shorooq, 2005), 194.

[181]"Ghali Raises Controversy about Authority in Egypt".

[182]Ajami, "The Sorrows of Egypt".

[183]Ali E. Hillal Dessouki, "The Limits of Instrumentalism: Islam in Egypt's Foreign Policy," in *Islam in Foreign Policy*, ed. Adeed Dawisha (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1983), 90.

[184]Ibid.

[185]According to Dessouki, "Islam has primarily been a capability and a resource to Egypt's foreign policy. Both 'Abd al-Nasir and Sadat used Islam as an instrument. Islam was more of a rationale or vindication for policy choices, rather than a motivation or a constraint." (Ibid., p. 85) The same goes for Pan-Arabsim. In the words of Hinnebusch, "it was only as long as Pan-Arabism corresponded to elite views of Egypt's interests that Pan-Arab identity dominated". (Raymond Hinnebusch, "The Politics of Identity in Middle East International Relations" in *International Relations of the Middle East*, ed. L. Fawcett (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

[186]Lorenz, *Egypt and the Arabs*, 116.

[187]Ibid., 119.

[188]Slavin, "Egypt's Mubarak 'Doesn't Take Risks'".

[189]Dowek, *Israeli-Egyptian Relations*, 289.

[190]Springborg, *Mubarak's Egypt*, 25.

[191]Ibid.

[192]Dowek, *Israeli-Egyptian Relations*, 288.

[193]"Mubarak's Shia Remarks Stir Anger," *Aljazeera.net*, 10 April 2006, http://english.aljazeera.net/English/archive/archive?ArchiveId=21914.

[194]Ibid.

[195]Ibid.

[196]Dessouki, "The Primacy of Economics: The Foreign Policy of Egypt", 169.

[197]Egyptian intellectuals and scholars believe that Al-Baz was employed at the time by the security services to observe the activities of fellow Egyptian students in the US, but such allegations cannot be confirmed.

[198]Dessouki, "The Primacy of Economics: The Foreign Policy of Egypt", 169.

[199]Springborg, *Mubarak's Egypt*, 31.

[200]Dessouki, "The Primacy of Economics: The Foreign Policy of Egypt", 169; Springborg, *Mubarak's Egypt*, 31.

[201]There seemed to be a consensus among the experts I interviewed in Cairo that the role of Al-Baz subsided the moment the involvement of Soliman and Gamal grew in the decision-making process.

[202]Springborg, *Mubarak's Egypt*, 31.

[203]Dessouki. "The Primacy of Economics: The Foreign Policy of Egypt.", p. 169.

[204]Mohamed Wahby, interview by author. Wahby says that Al-Sharif had the ambition of becoming Egypt's president.

[205]Ibid.

[206]Springborg, *Mubarak's Egypt*, 32.

[207]"Hassaballah Al-Kafrawi: Egypt is not My Mother's Estate so that I Can Pass it to My Son," *Al-Araby*, 12 June 2005.

[208]Gehad Ouda, *Gamal Mubarak: Reviving National Liberalism* (Cairo: Dar Al-Horeya, 2004), 177.

[209]Ahmed Fikry, "The Committee that Rules Egypt," *Al-Dustur*, 15 June 2005, 3.

[210]Kamel Labidi, "A New Hereditary Republic in Egypt?," *The Daily Star*, 10 July 2004.

[211]Frankel, "Egyptians Begin Asking: After Mubarak, What?"

[212]Sobelman, "Gamal Mubarak, President of Egypt?"

[213]In May 2000, President Mubarak clarified: "We are not a monarchy. We are the Republic of Egypt, so refrain from comparing us to other countries in the region." Gamal concurred: "I shall not seek any executive post…There is no room for such talk in a country like Egypt. We live in a country of institutions." (Ibid)

[214]The sense of humor of Egyptians reacted smartly to Mubarak's insistence to depict Egypt as a democratic country despite what they perceived as a grand plan to promote Gamal's stature in the Egyptian regime so that he succeeds his father; a joke circulated in Cairo in which Mubarak scolds aristocrats who were trying to convince him that hereditary rule is the regional fashion by saying: "Egypt's traditions are thoroughly democratic. I will let the people choose between my two sons." ("Like Father, Like Son: Monarchies, Hereditary Dictatorships and Family Nepotism in the Middle East," *The Economist*, 31 May 2001.).

[215]Daniel Williams, "Clearing the Path for Scion of Egypt," *The Washington Post*, 10 March 2006, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wpdyn/content/article/2006/03/10/AR2006031000164_pf.html.

[216]Gamal's inner group typically includes "businessmen, academics and Egyptians with political pedigrees in their families. Most are in their late thirties or early forties; many were educated and worked in the West. English is their second language." (Ibid). The most prominent members in Gamal's *shilla* (Arabic for gang) are Ahmed Ezz; a steel tycoon, Yusuf Boutruos-Ghali; nephew of former UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutrous-Ghali and Minister of Finance, Rashid Mohamed Rashid; a former CEO of Unilever Egypt and Minister of Industry and Foreign Trade, Mahmoud Mohy El-Din; a former professor of Economics and Minister of Investment and Mohamed Kamal; an assistant professor of Political Science at Cairo University and the unofficial spokesman of the Policies Secretariat.

[217]Rarely do the discussions of party members touch on foreign policy related issues. They remain preoccupied with the complaints of their constituencies which are related to the hardships of their lives (e.g. health, education, clean water, food…etc).

[218]Because of limited financial resources, diplomatic missions were only sent to four capitals: London, Paris, Rome and Washington.

[219]Osama El-Ghazaly Harb, "Egyptian Diplomacy From Amr Moussa's Enthusiasm to Ahmed Maher's Quietness," *Al-Ahram*, 9 July 2001, http://www.ahram.org.eg/archive/Index.asp?CurFN=OPIN3.HTM&DID=7081 ; Ahmed Ibrahim Mahmoud, *The Foreign Ministry* (Cairo: Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, 2003), 11-19.

[220]"Egypt: Foreign Policy Decision Making," AllRefer.com, http://reference.allrefer.com/country-guide-study/egypt/egypt145.html.

[221]Zahran, *Egypt's Foreign Policy*, 206-7.

[222]Dessouki, "The Primacy of Economics: The Foreign Policy of Egypt", 170.

[223]It is interesting to note that many of the veteran diplomats I interviewed for my field research expressed their bitterness and displeasure of the way Egypt's foreign affairs are handled by the presidency. The reason why they did not protest these same policies while still in office is not difficult to figure out, though. So the resignation submitted by Egypt's person in charge in Venezuela in 2005 in protest over Egypt's foreign policy, ubiquitous corruption, and Mubarak's decision to run for a new term stands as an exception.

[224]A hit by the popular Egyptian singer Shaaban Abdel-Rahim starts with the phrase: "I hate Israel and I love Amr Moussa", the first time the name of a foreign minister is mentioned in a song.

[225]Asked by Robert Satloff and Daniel Pipes whether he had fond memories for Nasser's era, Moussa said:

"This is not a question of wrong or right. I don't have to defend myself. Abdel Nasser was one of the leaders of this country, and his era was one of the most active in the region's political development…Abdel Nasser was among the leaders who tried to do things in a way that would enable the Arabs to feel that they are a people and to be respected.

At the same time, his charisma, leadership, and policy worked in the sixties and would not work in the nineties. Politics must change." ("Amre M. Moussa: A Nationalist Vision for Egypt," *Middle East Quarterly* III, no. 3 (September 1996): http://www.meforum.org/article/315)

[226]Hassan Eissa, interview by author, 4 May 2005, Cairo, tape recording, The Diplomatic Club, Cairo.

[227]For a good source on Omar Soliman see Mary Anne Weaver, "Pharaohs-in-Waiting," *The Atlantic Monthly* 292, no. 3 (October 2003).

[228]Sobelman, "Gamal Mubarak, President of Egypt?"

[229]Wahid Abdel-Meguid, interview by author, 6 November 2004, Cairo, tape recording, General Egyptian Book Organizatiom, Cairo. Abdel-Meguid contends that both Arafat and Israel tried to deceive Egyptian diplomats by giving them incorrect information. Diplomats' limited expertise and background in matters of such nature made the involvement of qualified and well-informed intelligence personnel rather inevitable.

[230]Saad Eddin Ibrahim, "Egypt's Landed Bourgeoisie," in *Developmentalism and Beyond: Society and Politics in Egypt and Turkey*, ed. Ayse Oncii, Caglar Keyder and Saad Eddin Ibrahim (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 1994), 39.

[231]Businessmen who pursue political careers either join the National Democratic Party (NDP) or the New Wafd Party. The old landed bourgeoisie tend to join the Wafd, whereas the newer ascendants to wealth prefer the NDP. When, moreover, party affiliations are changed, dissidents usually go to the other party (i.e. from the NDP to the Wafd and vice versa). (Ibid.)

[232]Ibid., 38.

[233]Ibid.

[234]Ibid.

[235]Unlike the ACCE, the membership of the ESB is confined to Egyptian citizens and companies. Nevertheless, there is a conspicuous overlap in the membership of both associations.

[236]For more information on the three organizations, see Thanaa Fouad Abdallah, "Egyptian-American Relations: Between Cooperation and Alliance," *Al-Mustaqbal Al-Arabi* 23, no. 262 (December 2000): 30-56; Saad Eddin Ibrahim, "Egypt's Landed Bourgeoisie"; and Amani Kandil, "Interest Groups and Foreign Policy: A Study on the Role of Businessmen in Egypt," in *Egypt's Foreign Policy in a Changing World*, ed. Ahmed Youssef Ahmed (Cairo: School of Economics and Political Science, Cairo University, 1990); Bessma Momani, "Promoting Economic Liberalization in Egypt: From U.S. Foreign Aid to Trade and Investment," *MERIA* 7, no. 3 (September 2003): http://meria.idc.ac.il/journal/2003/issue3/jv7n3a6.html.

[237]Bessma Momani, "Promoting Economic Liberalization in Egypt".

[238]Heikal, *Dialogues on the Crisis*, 32.

[239]Raymond Hinnebusch, *The International Politics of the Middle East* (Manchester & New York: Manchester University Press, 2003), 98.

[240]Ibid., 98-99.

[241]Ahmed Tohami Abdel-Hai, "The Mechanisms of Egyptian Foreign Policy-Making," *Al-Siyassa Al-Dawliya* 36 (January 2000): 73; Kandil, "Interest Groups and Foreign Policy", 446. Many propositions that were advocated by business associations were turned down by the regime. For instance, the government did not approve to the proposal forwarded by the Egyptian-American Presidential Council to apply patent rights on the Egyptian pharmaceutical sector, even before the ten-year respite the GATT grants was over. The Council argued that such a measure would increase foreign investments in Egypt, but the Egyptian government declined and reminded that the council's recommendations are not obligatory. (Abdallah, "Egyptian-American Relations: Between Cooperation and Alliance", 35.)

[242]Ali E. Hillal Dessouki, interview by author, 13 July 2006, Cairo, written notes, The National Democratic Party, Cairo.

[243]Walid Kazziha, interview by author, 27 October 2004, Cairo, tape recording, The American University in Cairo, Cairo.

[244]"Salama Ahmed Salama Continues Dissecting the Political Scene," *Al-Masry Al-Youm*, 6 July 2006, http://www.almasry-alyoum.com/article.aspx?ArticleID=22510.

[245]Raymond Hinnebusch, *Egyptian Politics under Sadat: The Post-populist Development of an Authoritarian-Modernizing State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 78.

[246]Murad Ghaleb, interview by author.

[247]Weaver, "Pharaohs-in-Waiting", 88.

[248]Kazziha, interview by author.

[249]Abu Ghazzala was Egypt's military attaché in Washington in the period from 1976 to 1980.

[250]David Butter, "Mubarak Hits Army Power Base," *Middle East Economic Digest*, 28 April 1989, 7.

[251]"Not a Popularity Contest," *Al-Ahram Weekly*, 17 May 2001, http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2001/534/eg41.htm.

[252]Ibid.

[253]Mustafa Kamel Al-Sayed, interview by author, 11 January 2005, Cairo, tape recording, The American University in Cairo, Cairo. According to an informant, Al-Sharif, provoked by Moussa's over-involvement in the media game, complained to the President of the latter's interference in his job as the official spokesman of the Egyptian government.

[254]Dessouki, interview by author.

[255]Telhami, "Arab Public Opinion and the Gulf War", 439.

[256]As'ad AbuKhalil, "Ideology and Foreign Policy in the Arab World: Jargon and Legitimacy," in *The Middle East at the Crossroads: The Changing Political Dynamics and Foreign Policy Challenges*, ed. Manochehr Dorraj (New York: University Press of America, 1999), 97.

[257]Telhami, "Arab Public Opinion and the Gulf War", 451.

[258]Wittes, "Hosni Mubarak: Elections or No, He's Still Pharaoh".

CHAPTER IV
CASE STUDY I
EGYPTIAN-IRANIAN RELATIONS

Introduction

This chapter starts with a general overview of Egyptian-Iranian relations throughout the different phases of ancient and contemporary history. It then moves to explain the current status of bilateral relations and reveals the dichotomy between the limited level of political and economic engagement it enjoys and the unlimited potential such relations could carry - politically and economically - if effectively developed. The numerous accounts given by scholars to explain that are presented and their deficiency shown. Finally, an attempt is made to explain the real reason behind the deterioration of Egyptian-Iranian relations. A concluding section summarizes the major findings of the chapter.

I Egypt and Iran: Historical Background

Since Egypt became an Ottoman province in the year 1517 and up till the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire in the early twentieth century, political relations between both countries basically took place through Istanbul. The first formal exchange of ambassadors between Iran and the Ottoman Empire took place in 1815. At the time, the Iranian ambassador to Istanbul was responsible for Persian affairs and interests in all Ottoman regions, including Egypt. Yet, a treaty signed in 1848 between Iran and the Turks allowed the former to open consulates in various Ottoman cities, including Cairo. An Iranian consulate was thus opened in Cairo for the first time in the year 1852.

Political relations between Egypt and Iran have since that time improved steadily. An Iranian delegation attended the Suez Canal opening ceremony in 1869. And in 1884, the Iranian consulate was upgraded into a “political agency”, the highest form of political representation at the time. In fact, Iran was the only oriental country diplomatically represented in Cairo in the pre-1922 period. Conversely, Egypt was the first oriental country to dispatch a diplomatic mission to Tehran.[1] When Egypt gained its independence in February 1922, Iran recognized that independence without delay, and the level of representation was upgraded once again to a charge d’affaires. In return, Egypt was the only Arab state with a

charge d'affaires in Tehran. A Treaty of Friendship was signed in November 1928 followed in 1930 with a trade agreement. The Foreign Ministers of the two countries met in September 1938 and they agreed on elevating the level of political representation into fully-fledged embassies. The Iranian embassy in Cairo was opened indeed as early as January 1939. As such, it was the second embassy to operate in the Egyptian capital after that of Great Britain. In the same year, a kinship relationship was established with the royal marriage of Prince Mohamed Reda Pahlavi (the last Shah, ousted in 1979 by the Iranian revolution) and Princess Fawziya, sister of King Farouk[2]. In 1951, Iran became the first country to recognize Farouk's new title: "King of Egypt and Sudan"[3].

Cultural and economic relations also grew in the 19th and 20th centuries. A large number of Farsi periodicals and magazines, for example, were published in Cairo and Alexandria[4] and many Iranian charities and schools were set up. Shortly after Cairo University was opened in 1908, an institute for teaching oriental languages was launched, that teaches Farsi alongside other languages. The University of Ain Shams, established in 1950, followed suit by teaching Persian literature and language[5]. In 1947, a great step towards bridging the breach between different Islamic sects was taken when the efforts of Sunni and Shiite religious scholars from Egypt and Iran culminated in the founding of "the Foundation of Reconciling Islamic Sects".

Economic relations flourished at the time as well. Iranian products like silk, tobacco, silver, carpets, fruit and gum were popular in Egypt[6]. As a result, an Iranian chamber of commerce was found in Cairo in the first half of the twentieth century. In the years 1952, 1953 and 1954, Iran's volume of trade with Egypt was higher than that it had with many major economic powers like the United States, Russia, India, Pakistan and Italy[7].

II 1952-2007: Fifty-Five Years of Tension

The following part scans the development of Egyptian-Iranian relations over the period from 1952 to 1989, pinpoints the different phases they have gone through and explains the reasons behind the several growths and declines they have experienced. It is divided into three sections ordered chronologically: Nasser and the Shah (covering the period from the Free Officer's revolution in 1952 to Nasser's demise in September 1970), Sadat and the Shah

(covering the period from Nasser's death to Sadat's assassination) and the first decade following the Islamic revolution in Iran (from Khomeini's ascendance to his departure).

Nasser and the Shah: Inevitable Clash

By the time Nasser and his comrades turned their eyes to the wide Middle Eastern region after accomplishing the British withdrawal from the Suez Canal base and settling the basis of their new republic at home, the Iranian Prime Minister Mohamed Mosaddeq was not around on stage anymore, for the nationalist leader who had in 1951 nationalized the Iranian oil sector was ousted by a CIA-backed coup on the 13th of August, 1953, just one year after the successful coup of the "Free Officers" in Cairo. Had this not happened, one would expect Nasser and Mossadeq to develop cordial relations since they shared the same agenda of fighting colonialism and nationalizing foreign assets.

Nasser's relations with the Shah were strained for most of the period from 1954 to 1970. The first clash came over the Baghdad Pact that started in the form of the Turkish-Iraqi Treaty (later to be joined by Britain, Pakistan and Iran). As explained in chapter two, Nasser perceived the pact to be a threat to Egypt's position in the region and hence did his best to deter other countries from joining it. From that time on, Arab politics came to be defined in terms of two opposing camps: a revolutionary camp on one hand that is led by Nasser's Egypt standing for anti-colonialism, non-alignment and some form of socialism and a conservative camp on the other that is composed of monarchies that have strong links with Western powers, are less sensitive to progressive ideas and less interested in antagonizing Israel. Egypt's membership (and leadership) of the former and Iran's association with the latter deemed a clash of interests rather inevitable. The shockwaves sent by the unanticipated Egyptian-Syrian Union in February 1958, as well as the Iraqi revolution in July of the same year that altered the map of the region and shattered the Baghdad Pact. This heightened Iran's suspicions and convinced the Shah that Nasser had the capability of steering the course of events in a way that is too threatening to his country's interests. Moving closer to the United States was his reaction. In 1959, Iran signed a common defense treaty with the United States.

Throughout Nasser's era, bilateral relations turned trilateral, for "the Israeli factor" came to play a big role in the development of Egyptian-Iranian relations[8]. Egypt was not pleased with the improvement in Israeli-Iranian relations and the uninterrupted flow of Iranian

oil to Israel. Though kept at a low-profile for years, the Shah has grown over the years bolder in revealing his secret ties with Israel[9]. In 1959, the office of the "Jewish Agency" was reopened in the Iranian capital. In the following year, relations between Egypt and Iran reached their lowest ebb when the Shah announced on the 24th of July, 1960 that he restored full diplomatic relations with Israel[10]. Two days later, Nasser decided in a public speech to severe diplomatic relations with Iran and a vicious political and propaganda battle ensued.

Nasser, the father of liberation movements and revolutionary groups in the 1950s and 1960s, decided to escalate the confrontation with the Shah by supporting some factions of the Iranian opposition. In January 1964, for example, meetings took place in Cairo between Egyptian officials and the leaders of "Iran's Freedom Movement", an underground movement with ties to various religious leaders (including Khomeini) and Mossadeq's followers. Egypt agreed to fund the group, provide it with training and ammunitions and intensify its propaganda warfare directed at the policies of the Shah[11].

Iran, proud of its history and regional prestige, was likewise not content with the attempts of the Arab World - led by Egypt - to change the name of the "Persian Gulf" into the "Arabian Gulf"[12]. The Shah's hegemonic policies in the Persian Gulf and his attempt to amalgamate Bahrain with Iran were also met by Nasser's vehement opposition.

An ally of Israel and a foe of Nasser's Arab nationalism, the Shah was happy with the results of the 1967 war.[13] Ironically, this happiness helped pave the way for resuming ties with Egypt for the reason that Nasser's humiliating defeat by Israel reduced his regional ambitions and forced him to focus on the imperative task of liberating the occupied land. A rapprochement with Arab conservatives took place during the Arab summit in Khartoum in August 1967, by which the Arab "Cold War" - the main feature of the Arab state system in the 1960s - was officially brought to an end. The Shah after that was less hostile to Egypt. Nasser, toothless since the humiliation of June, lost much of his previous appeal and pragmatism began to guide his foreign policy. The unanticipated fiasco in the mountains of Yemen and the swift defeat in the deserts of Sinai taught Nasser an important lesson: No adventures abroad would be pursued anymore for all resources should be utilized to regain the captured Sinai. Another regional development that brought the two countries closer was the military coup in Iraq and the resulting tension in Baghdad's relations with Cairo and Tehran. The Iraqis opposed the Rogers Initiative that Nasser had accepted and the cease-fire it imposed on

Egyptian-Israeli borders. Border disputes (on Shat ElArab) and regional rivalry marked their relationship with Iran. Egypt and Iran were also troubled by the reckless actions of the new government in Iraq that was pushing Arab states to an uneven military confrontation against Israel. Thus, they found it useful to come closer in order to put brakes on the policies of ideology-driven Baathists. The mediation of many countries (Kuwait, Libya, Jordan, Turkey, Pakistan and Afghanistan[14]) culminated in the resumption of full political relations in August 1970. A month later, Nasser died. Under Sadat, relations were given a fresh push.

Sadat and the Shah: Short Honeymoon

Sadat's restructuring of Egypt's foreign policy led to an unprecedented improvement in Egyptian-Iranian relations. Sadat visited Tehran while en route to Moscow in 1971 for talks with the Shah. Unlike Nasser's ultra-activist policy, Sadat opted for a quieter and more conciliatory regional policy. Arab leadership endeavors were shunned and interference in the domestic affairs of other states was brought to a halt. Sadat no longer saw Iran as an anti-Arab force whose policies are detrimental to Arab interests, but rather "as a stabilizing force that would benefit the Arab littoral states of the Gulf"[15].

The 1973 Arab-Israeli round cemented the nascent Egyptian-Iranian relationship. Although the Shah supplied Israel with oil before and during the war, he verbally condemned Israel's occupation of Arab territories and called for her withdrawal. He also allowed the Soviet planes delivering military supplies to Egypt to use Iranian airspace[16].

The change in Egypt's international patron after the war from the Soviet Union to the United States drew the countries closer. Both countries considered the Soviet Union to be their formidable enemy and were determined to fight the communist influence in the Middle East. In the meantime, they developed close strategic, military and economic ties with the United States. Additionally, The Shah fully supported Sadat's peace initiative with Israel in 1977 and the subsequent Egyptian-Israeli peace negotiations and accords. He was the second foreign leader after Jimmy Carter to express his unequivocal support for the Camp David Accords[17].

The restoration and improvement of political relations led to a significant development in economic relations. Iran provided Egypt with grants and soft loans and embarked on constructing several projects in Egypt such as the reconstruction of Port Said, the widening of the Suez Canal and the establishment of several agricultural and industrial joint-ventures (in

petrochemicals, shipping, textiles and banking)[18]. In return, Sadat offered Iran Mediterranean port facilities which enabled Tehran to access and expand ties with European and African markets[19].

Ironically, the two leaders were subjected to the same fate and for essentially the same reasons. The Shah - the "American King"[20]- lost his empire by a popular revolution and died a year thereafter in exile and Sadat was assassinated by his 'boys' on his October glory day for "befriending Americans and Jews"[21].

Revolution and After

The ramifications of revolutions are not always confined to the domestic scene, for some revolutions have regional and international repercussions as well. The fact that the revolution of the masses and clerics on the streets of Iran managed in only a few months to destroy one of the most formidable and fortified regimes in the Middle East was tantamount to an earthquake to the motionless Middle Eastern sub-system that is dominated by monarchs and lifetime presidents and characterized by low levels of popular participation. The Iranian Revolution was the second serious challenge to the Middle East state system after the civil war in Yemen, which triggered - to use the expression of Malcolm Kerr - the 'Arab Cold War'[22].

In contrast to Iran under the Shah - a status quo power with an interest in regional stability - the new regime embarked on activist, adventurous and in some instances hostile policies and aimed at spreading its message among oppressed Muslims worldwide. The defection of Iran from the moderates' camp dramatically altered the balance of forces in the region. Naturally, these developments were received with suspicion and concern in conservative Arab capitals, for the norms espoused and advocated by the Iranians (e.g. revolution, pan-Islam) were antithetical to those embraced by moderate Arab states. Hence, the creation of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) was, among others, a direct response to the challenges posed by the rise of the Islamic republic in Iran.[23]

It was obvious from the revolution's first day that Iranian-Egyptian relations were destined for a new round of confrontation. The agendas of the two regimes were at odds with each other. At the time that furious Iranian revolutionaries were shouting anti-US and anti-Israel slogans, Sadat was making peace with Israel and developing an Egyptian-American

strategic alliance[24]. Diplomatic relations broke off in April 1979 and recriminations between Sadat and Khomeini reached their peak by late 1979. Sadat said he was:

"sad for the Islamic nation, because Khomeini's fever is beginning to catch onto some Moslem leaders. But I will not hesitate to fight this disease if it tries to creep into some souls here"[25].

Khomeini answered back. In an interview with prominent Egyptian journalist Mohamed Heikal, he expressed his sadness at the attitude of the Egyptian President. He stated that:

"the Egyptian nation is one thing, and Mr. Sadat is something else. How sad I am to see that a person who says he is the leader of an Islamic country sits at the same table as two persons who are both enemies of Islam, the Israeli regime, the United States"[26].

The reception of the ousted Shah and his family in Cairo and offering them political asylum in March 1980 further exacerbated Egyptian-Iranian tensions. Moreover, the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq war in the same year and the massive support given by Egypt to Iraq plainly meant that Egypt is an enemy. Relations remained thereafter extremely tense till the end of hostilities in the Gulf and the death of Khomeini.

Tension endured even after Rafsanjani took over and pursued a pragmatic interest-driven policy aimed at ending Tehran's international isolation caused by the early revolutionary fervor and the pressures of the Gulf War. The antagonists left the scene; Khomeini died, Sadat was assassinated and the war between Iran and Iraq ended, but the relations between Egypt and Iran remained broken. Eight years of the presidency of Mohamed Khatami who adamantly intended to develop friendly relations with all countries worldwide did not stimulate the recovery of the lifeless relations[27].

III The Dilemma

The current nature and level of Egyptian-Iranian relations is too odd. A number of historical, cultural, political, economic and strategic factors suggest that the resumption of bilateral relations is rather natural:

1- In the Middle East, Iran is an important country. Its importance "is often compared with China's importance to South-East Asia or with that of Germany to Europe"[28]. Not having diplomatic relations with Egypt - another major state in the Middle East - is rather unnatural.

2- Egypt and Iran share a common culture that is primarily centered on Islam and a long history of cultural interaction in addition to centuries of economic and political engagement.

3- Egypt and Iran belong to the same geographical region and are therefore concerned about the major issues, challenges and threats facing that system of states. At the same time, they do not share common borders and, as such, do not pose any serious threat to one another[29]. Additionally, the location of each is conducive to the other's interests for Egypt could be Iran's gate into Africa and the Arab world and Iran could serve as Egypt's gate into Central Asia.

4- Egypt and Iran are members in a number of political organizations and economic groupings such as The Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), the G-15 (a group of developing countries from Asia, Africa and Latin America[30] established to foster economic cooperation) and the Group of 77 (a coalition of Third World states established in 1964). Moreover, they are both members in the Jerusalem Committee set by the OIC to advance the cause of Jerusalem and protect its Islamic identity vis-à-vis Israeli attempts to dominate and Judaize the holy city.

5- The stances taken by Egypt and Iran towards most regional issues are identical. The endeavor to free the Middle East from weapons of mass destruction is a case in point. In 1975, they both took the initiative and coordinated their efforts in this regard till the breakup of the Islamic revolution in 1979. In the 1990s, Egypt was most vocal in the call for freeing the region from unconventional weapons[31]. Now, both countries attempt to force Israel to sign the NPT, open its nuclear plants for international inspection and dismantle its nuclear arsenal, though no coordination between both on that front is witnessed[32].

Other issues on which their viewpoints do coincide include the support of the Palestinian people and their right to establish an independent state, opposition to the American attack on Iraq, resistance to the serious possibility of the division of Iraq and the basic agreement on the paramount role of the United Nations in solving disputes.

6- The current level of economic interaction (trade and investment) is certainly insignificant. But experts maintain that if political relations are restored, huge economic benefits could be secured by both states. Section four of this chapter explains in detail the level and types of economic cooperation that took place in the period from 1989 to 2007 and the high potential such relations may carry if returned to normalcy.

7- The substantial influence of neo-conservatives upon the American administration, manifested by the militarized reaction of George W. Bush to the events of 9/11 (e.g. the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq) posed a threat to the stability of the Middle East and the interests of Egypt and Iran. On the strategic level, therefore, one would normally expect a higher level of consultation, if not cooperation, between the two countries. This, however, did not happen, even in the period preceding the American invasion of Iraq, when the majority of regional and international players were doing their best to avoid a much unwanted war.

8- Both governments realize the seriousness of the regional Israeli superiority in conventional and unconventional weapons and the tremendous support given to the Jewish state by the United States and are certainly troubled by that. No doubt, the Israeli-Turkish military alliance that was signed in 1996[33] and the ascendance of a right-wing government and premiere (Ariel Sharon) in 2001 further fed their security concerns.

Egypt borders Israel and engaged in fighting her four times in thirty years (1948, 1956, 1967 and 1973). The subsequent Peace Treaty notwithstanding, Israel's hegemony in the Middle East is not in the long-term interest of Egypt, a major regional player itself. Iran, on the other hand, is Israel's number one enemy and vice versa. Not only did both countries exchange a hostile political and propaganda warfare since the success of the Islamic revolution in 1979 but a possible Israeli preemptive strike of Iran's nuclear facilities (similar to the strike of the Iraqi nuclear plant in 1981) has been reported in the media repeatedly. Yet, no traces were found of any serious attempt to revive Egyptian-Iranian relations to face the common threat.

In spite of these reasons and motivations, Egyptian-Iranian relations are frozen for more than quarter a century now. Suffice it to say that Iran enjoys diplomatic relations with all Arab and Islamic countries, except Egypt. Likewise, Egypt has full diplomatic relations with almost all countries worldwide, with the exception of Iran[34].

The dilemma just presented explains why many scholars and intellectuals from both sides expressed their deep astonishment towards the existing stalemate. They perceived the sustained cutting of ties as something "surprising"[35], "unjustified", "unconvincing"[36] and "absolutely abnormal"[37] that is produced by "fake obstacles"[38]. The relations are, furthermore,

governed by “a strange and eccentric pattern”[39], one that resembles “a game of roulette” rather than a traditional political game[40].

IV Limited Relations, Unlimited Potential

This section highlights the political, economic and cultural communications that took place between Egypt and Iran starting from the year 1989 and up till the present. Then, it sheds light on the enormous economic and strategic potential they promise for both countries if developed.

1989-2007

The first interaction between Egypt and Iran since the triumph of the Islamic revolution came immediately after the end of hostilities between Iran and Iraq. In a show of goodwill, Iran decided to free the Egyptian prisoners of war captured during the eight-year Gulf war.

In 1990, an Iranian delegation visited Egypt to participate in the OIC conference. It met with President Mubarak, along with all participating delegations. In 1991, Iran’s Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati met his Egyptian counterpart Amr Moussa in Belgrade, where they both attended a conference for the foreign ministers of non-aligned countries. In the same year, interest sections were opened in both capitals for the first time since the severing of relations in 1979. In 1992, Velayati and Moussa met in Jakarta, again during a conference held by the non-aligned group.

In 1997, Velayati visited Egypt for the first time to submit the formal Iranian invitation sent by Iranian President Rafsanjani to the Egyptian President to attend the Islamic Conference held in Iran in the same year. In December, Moussa and an Egyptian delegation visited Tehran to attend the conference.

In 1998, the Egyptian Health Minister visited Tehran and an agreement on medicine was signed. In the same year, a huge delegation (40 members) representing the industrial and commercial Egyptian chambers visited Tehran as well. On the other hand, the head of the Iranian press agency visited Cairo, met with the Egyptian Minister of Culture and invited him to visit Iran.

In 1999, an Egyptian parliamentary delegation headed by Mohamed Abdellah, Chairman of the People's Assembly's Foreign Relations Committee, visited Tehran. The delegation included chairmen of the assembly's religious and industry committees. In the following year, an Iranian parliamentary delegation led by Mohsen Madi, Chairman of the National Defense and Foreign Affairs committee in the 'Majlis', visited Cairo to take part in the convention of Islamic parliaments.

The first phone conversation between both presidents took place in 1999 when Mubarak congratulated Khatami on Iran's entry into the G-15. In 2001, Iran participated in the Cairo International Book Fair for the first time. At the end of the year, Iran's Foreign Minister visited Cairo for consultations on the repercussions of the attacks of September 11 and ways of combating international terrorism.[41]

In a goodwill gesture, the spokesman of Iran's Foreign Ministry, Hamid Reza Asefi, criticized in August 2002 the American Administration's decision of not providing additional aid to Egypt in protest of the trial of prominent political sociologist Saad Eddin Ibrahim in Cairo. Asefi considered the decision a crude interference in Egypt's domestic affairs[42].

Mubarak-Khatami Meeting

The most significant event in the course of Egyptian-Iranian relations since the Islamic revolution came in December 2003 when the Presidents of the two countries met for the first time in quarter a century. Mubarak and Khatami had a fifty-minute meeting in Geneva outside a UN technology summit. The landmark summit generated a flurry of statements and expectations regarding the almost immediate normalization of relations. Recognizing the value of maintaining good Egyptian-Iranian affairs, intellectuals in both countries were the first to jump into hasty and exaggerated conclusions about the "historical meeting" that will open "a new chapter" in the history of the Middle East and Muslim World[43]. Their inflated optimism about the future of relations was shared by Iranian officials who had been eager to reestablish political relations with Egypt for years.[44] The spokesman of the Iranian Foreign Ministry Hamid Reza Asefi, for example, said that the political atmosphere between Egypt and Iran had "totally changed"[45]. The Iranian Vice President Mohammad Ali Abtahi went even further by telling the Associated Press that:

"Iran and Egypt have decided to fully resume diplomatic ties. An official announcement to that effect is expected in the next few days"[46].

But in return to the Iranian "all time high" willingness to restore full ties with Egypt[47], Cairo was apparently not in a hurry. Egypt's Foreign Minister Ahmed Maher thought the statement made by Abtahi was premature. He said:

"I've seen it. It is a statement about the future. When the future becomes the present, you will hear from me."[48]

Obviously, Maher was not enthusiastic[49], something that was not missed by Iranian officials who were perplexed by Cairo's sudden change of mood. In an informal conversation with an Egyptian journalist, Rafsanjani said: "I do not understand. Ask your folks about the reason. We had finished everything till Maher gave that statement which destroyed all our efforts."[50]

Keeping that ambivalence in mind, it is not farfetched (in many observers' estimation) to assume that, from an Egyptian point of view, the meeting with Khatami was not motivated by a genuine interest in Iran. But it was rather a mere maneuver performed with an eye on the Americans, who - for obvious political and strategic considerations - would not be content to observe Egyptian-Iranian relations come back to life. A source from within the diplomatic establishment with extensive experience regarding the file of Iran asserted that "Mubarak was maneuvering with the Americans. The meeting was not intended to resurrect relations with Iran." A scholar of Iran expressed quite the same opinion:

"When Mubarak went to meet Khatami, he was looking for something that is connected to his relationship with America, not to the future of his relationship with Iran."[51]

In January 2004, Egypt sent humanitarian assistance to Iran in the wake of the destructive earthquake that hit the historical city of Bam, but it still showed no intention of revitalizing the semi-dead political relations. Khatami's invitation notwithstanding, Mubarak did not attend the economic summit of developing countries held in Tehran in February 2004. The decision made by the Tehran City Council to change the name of the street holding the identity of Sadat's assassin (Khaled El-Islambouli) into another one, a demand long on the Egyptian government's wish list, could not alter the Egyptian position a bit.

The participation of Iran's Foreign Minister Kamal Kharazi and Egypt's Interior Minister Habib Al-adly in Iraq's neighbors conferences convened in Sharm Al-Sheikh and

Tehran respectively did not lead to any further improvement. With the passage of time, the momentum produced by the Mubarak-Khatami meeting was lost and the intensity of talk in both capitals about normalizing relations dramatically declined. In November 2004, relations fell back again to zero point when Cairo accused an Iranian diplomat of espionage. Whether the case was fabricated or not is not entirely clear. However, had Egypt been interested in developing relations with Tehran, it would have refrained from publicly announcing the case. The foot-dragging attitude gave credence to the theory that supposes that, from an Egyptian point of view, the meeting in Geneva was not agreed to, in the first place, for an interest in reconciliation with Iran, but was rather undertaken with an eye on the Americans. Said plainly, Egypt tried to make gains from the United States by implying that a resumption of diplomatic relations with Iran is imminent. Even though the theory might be far-fetched a bit, many senior diplomats embrace it.

In the years 2005 and 2006, Mubarak received a number of Iranian visitors and several meetings took place between the foreign ministers of both countries. Communication particularly increased in the summer of 2006 during Israel's war on Lebanon, when Egypt's efforts to end hostilities required negotiating with Hizbullah's chief patron.

Two facts are revealed by the previous review. First, the Iranians showed more interest in resuming bilateral relations than Egyptians. The Iranian government took the initiative[52], but the Egyptian leadership was not enthusiastic and wholehearted. Second, most of the meetings took place on the sides of international conferences and regional gatherings. Direst contacts and consultations remained limited. Moreover, many were related to technical issues and low-politics problems and were as such apolitical.

Economic Relations: Promising Potential

The Islamic Republic of Iran has one of the biggest economies in the Middle East. In 1999, the GNP of Iran amounted to $110 billion. In addition to size, geographical proximity to Egypt and hence low levels of transportation costs should normally suggest a high level of economic interaction between Egypt and Iran. Yet, strained political relations seriously inhibited progress on the economic front.

Trade between Egypt and Iran is close to nonexistence. Egypt's imports from Iran in the years 1999, 2000 and 2001 were an insignificant $13 million, $16 million and $11 million

respectively. Compared to total Egyptian imports of $12.7 billion (in 2001) and total Iranian exports of $15.1 billion (in 1999), these figures constitute much less than 1% of Egypt's total imports and likewise less than 1% of Iran's total exports[53]. Even worse, Egypt's exports to Iran in the year 1999 did not exceed $1 million, in particular $0.4 million, again a very tiny figure in the context of Egypt's gross exports and Iran's gross imports[54](see appendix, table I). Trade with Egypt is trivial compared to Iran's overall level of trade with other countries in Europe and the Arab world (see appendix, tables II and III).

The volume of Iranian investments in Egypt is no more substantial than is trade. They are confined to eight joint ventures (most of them established during the time of the Shah) with a total capital of LE 454 million (less than $80 million). The Iranian share in these ventures is around LE 108 million (less than $20 million)[55] (see appendix, table IV).

Even so, the potential is still high if economic relations were developed. Ahmed Al-Sayyed Al-Naggar, economic expert at Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies and author of several studies on economic relations between Egypt and Iran, argues that good prospects for developing economic relations do exist if both countries agreed to open up their sizeable markets to each other. Egypt, for example, is a major exporter of Rice. In 1999, it exported 307 thousand tons of rice with a total value of $87.6 million, at an average price of $285/ton. In the same year, Iran imported around 852 thousand tons of rice with a total value of $252.5 million, at an average price of $296/ton. Hence, Egypt's competitive prices could enable her to enter the Iranian market.

The same applies to fruit products. In 2000, Egypt produced 620 thousand tons of Bananas, 232 thousand tons of Mango and 54 thousand tons of Strawberry. Just like rice, Iran is a major importer of fruits and would likely become a major customer of Egypt if political strains were relaxed.

On the other hand, Iran is a major producer of nuts. In 2000, it produced 200 thousand tons of pistachio, 96 thousand tons of almond and 11 thousand tons of chestnut. Egypt purchases large quantities of these products every year from high-priced sources. Iran is also a major seller of apples and dried grapes, both of which are on the import list of Egypt[56]. Also, Egypt's chronic deficit in wheat production could be worked out by learning from Iran's self-reliance in that essential commodity[57].

In addition to these vital agricultural products, a chance for trade in industrial products exists as well, for Iran exports a wide range of petroleum products and Egypt exports food products and ceramics[58]. Furthermore, agreements already signed between Egyptian and Iranian companies to produce cars and buses are frozen because of the political stalemate. If revived, the volume of those agreements would exceed $550 million[59]. Moreover, Iran is expected to invest heavily in Egypt's oil sector if political relations return to normalcy[60]. On the other hand, the ability of Iran to attract Arab investment will most probably rise if the atmosphere surrounding Arab-Iranian relations in general and Egyptian-Iranian relations in particular was enhanced. In addition to the abovementioned benefits expected to be gained if relations were resumed, Egypt would profit economically from another lucrative source of hard currency, namely tourism. Egypt contains many Shi'ite shrines that would attract thousands of Iranian pilgrims if Egyptian authorities agreed to grant them entry visas. According to an Iranian journalist[61]:

"Syria has only one Shi'ite site and it receives thousands every year. Egypt, which has about 7 Shi'ite sites, will definitely attract more than 50,000 Iranian tourists"[62].

Other well-informed sources gave much higher estimates. The Iranian Ambassador to Egypt expected the flow of one million Iranian tourists to Egypt if political relations improved.[63] Also, the annual revenue reaped by Egypt after a few years of opening up to Iranian tourism would exceed $5 billion, a well-connected Egyptian journalist estimated.[64]

Whatever the actual number may be, Egypt currently receives no unofficial Iranian visitors at all, for the Egyptian authorities still declines to grant Iranian citizens visas, including members of NGOs, businessmen and politicians who wish to participate in events held in Egypt. Forty members of an Iranian NGO, for example, were not able to attend a conference on youth held in Alexandria. Also, many businessmen could not attend the Iranian exhibition held in Cairo in 1999[65]. Iranian publishers faced the same fate, despite receiving official invitations to take part in the Cairo International Book Fair[66]. The official status and prestige of the Iranian Vice President Mohammad Ali Abtahi were, likewise, not enough to get him the required approval of Egypt's security authorities[67].

V Examining Literature

Plenty of Theories, Scarcity of Persuasion Power

Two major deficiencies mark the existing scholarship of Egyptian-Iranian relations: the scarcity of sources and that the explanations given are too loose and do not offer very solid answers. The first problem of studies on Egyptian-Iranian relations is, ironically, the lack of such studies. A survey of literature showed that a very few English works - books, chapters in books or research papers published in academic journals - dealt with the type of relationship Cairo and Tehran have experienced over the past two decades. Arabic sources, moreover, are mostly journalistic pieces or essays rather than solid academic ventures. This is because researchers up to now were more interested in studying the troublesome Iranian-American encounters or Iran's relations with the European countries, Gulf States and the newly independent republics of Central Asia. Specialists on Egypt, on the other hand, focused on Egypt's role in the Arab World, the swings in its relationship with superpowers or, to a lesser extent, its policy towards Europe and Africa. If this shortage is contrasted to the amount of literature available on the study of any two regional powers in a subsystem - for instance, Germany and France in Europe, or India and China in East Asia - one would recognize how much the subject has been neglected and what contribution such a study offers to our knowledge of Egyptian-Iranian relations and the dynamics governing the foreign policy of Egypt.

The launch of the monthly "Mukhtarat Iraniah" (Iranian Selections) in the year 2000 by Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies was a positive step towards a better understanding of the dynamics of Egyptian-Iranian relations. In addition to the works of Egyptian scholars, the magazines includes many articles and essays written by Iranian scholars and journalists (most of which published earlier in the Iranian press) and it provides, as such, a useful exposure to the thoughts and perspectives of Iranian intellectuals for those who do not read Farsi, but master Arabic. Furthermore, the study of Egyptian-Iranian relations is among the favorite topics of the editorial board, for the magazine was meant to be in the first place a bridge linking Egyptian and Iranian researchers.

The second problem is that the justifications frequently presented by scholars as potential reasons for the bizarre stalemate characterizing the status of Egyptian-Iranian relations over the past two decades were at best inadequate; at worst unpersuasive. A number of factors in particular were repeatedly stressed on: Iran's continued occupation of the islands of the United Arab Emirates, its opposition to the Middle East peace process, the street in

Tehran named after the killer of late Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, the different ideologies embraced by the two regimes and the influence of the threatening "export of the revolution" notion upon Egyptian policy-makers. In my opinion, none of the aforementioned factors does provide a fully convincing answer to the question of why Egypt has been reluctant to re-establish diplomatic relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran, in spite of the extremely clear benefits of doing so. I am not in any way dismissing their relevance or denying their importance. Rather, I am arguing that their power to explain the research question is limited if the question of "regime survival" is excluded and that they moreover are less important than that issue.

It should be noted here that some of the arguments presented were given and reiterated by practitioners of the game of politics not by hunters of logic, and this in itself makes them neither credible nor scientific. Many scholars, unfortunately, followed these statements blindly which gave them over time underserved credence among the populace and academics alike. Hence, I will attempt to examine the body of literature and demonstrate that it mistreated the subject and then proceed by explaining the real reasons using the framework presented in chapter one.

1- Foreign Policy Differences

Dissimilar policies adopted by Egypt and Iran towards regional issues of significance further tore the two countries apart. Two examples are important in this regard: their position towards the security arrangements in the Persian Gulf and the Arab-Israeli peace process.

a- Persian Gulf Security and the Dispute between Iran and the United Arab Emirates

On the eve of the British withdrawal from the Persian Gulf in December 1971, the Shah occupied the islands of Abu Musa, Small and Greater Tunb, claimed to be part of the United Arab Emirates. The expansionist move was part of the Shah's regional ambitions, in particular the role of the region's 'policeman' he always envisaged for his country as well as his aspirations to transform Iran into a global power; the 'fifth greatest power on earth'. Needless to say, all Arab countries (including Egypt) fully supported the UAE during the diplomatic warfare that followed the seizure of the islands. The incident poisoned Arab-Iranian relations and Egyptian-Iranian relations, many analysts argued.

Egypt enjoys strong economic relations with the littoral states of the Gulf. The presence of millions of workers whose remittances support the suffering Egyptian economy linked the region to Egypt's economy and made its stability "an Egyptian national security interest"[68]. In the years from 1974 to 1984, some $33 billion were transferred to Egypt by its working force in the Gulf region, a major contribution in view of Egypt's growing economic crisis and its acute need of hard currency[69]. Not only that, but Egypt's tourism sector receives every year a large number of Arab tourists, who usually stay longer and spend more than their European and American counterparts. In 1982, for example, 613,000 Arab tourists visited Egypt, around 43.41% of the total number of tourists. The number jumped by 1992 to 1.1 million, around 34% of tourists received that year[70]. Obviously, destabilizing the breeding ground of much-needed income could not in any way be tolerated by the Egyptian leadership[71].

Strategically, Egypt - a major Middle East player and a serious contender for regional leadership - has opposed Iran's hegemony in the Gulf as its imperial role has threatened Egypt's influence in the oil (and conflict)-rich area. This is exactly where the issue of the islands fit, for the occupation of the islands embodies Iran's leadership designs, its expansionist intentions and its perceptions of the nature and extent of the role it shall play in the Persian Gulf. Hence, the islands issue transcends its own peculiarities and reflects a wider and more significant question, which is the security of the Persian Gulf and the different arrangements proposed for the maintenance of its security and stability. Iran, for example, has vehemently opposed any kind of foreign presence in the area, including that of Arab non-Gulf states. The formula of the Damascus Declaration (6+2) signed in the aftermath of the Iraqi invasion trauma by the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman and the UAE) as well as Egypt and Syria was rejected by Iran, not only because the arrangement pointlessly excluded Iran from the plan[72], but also because it allowed out-of-area states an undesired military foothold in her backyard.

The aforementioned differences on the issue of Gulf security were seen by many analysts as a potential reason behind the non-stop tension in Egyptian-Iranian relations[73]. The rationale, however, is not valid for a number of reasons. Since Rafsanjani, Iran has kept cordial relations with Saudi Arabia, its chief adversary and the major contestant for leadership in the region. The Saudis - just like Egypt - clashed with revolutionary Iran in the 1980s on

various fronts (e.g. war with Iraq, pilgrimage confrontations in Mecca and on the 'export of revolution' issue), differed on the way security in the Gulf should be maintained and, moreover, allowed Americans to establish military bases on their soil. Had the divergence on Gulf policy and the occupied islands been the real reason behind the rupture in Egyptian-Iranian relations, one would expect it to seriously affect Saudi-Iranian relations in the first place because of the centrality of the issue to Saudi interests and the status of Saudi Arabia among the members of the GCC. But none of that had been witnessed in Saudi-Iranian encounters. In fact, Saudi-Iranian relations were resumed back in April 1991, during a visit made by President Rafsanjani to Riyadh. Likewise, Iran keeps friendly political relations and formidable economic ties with the rest of its Arab neighbors, despite the bitter heritage of the Iran-Iraq war, when all Gulf countries aided Saddam Hussein in his 'sacred' war against Iran, something that had, as a matter of fact, "left a deep scar on the national psyche of the Iranians"[74]. Recently, Iran requested an 'observer' seat in the Arab League, a clear indication of its interest in improving ties with the Arab world. According to Iranian MP, Seyyed Mahmoud Alavi:

"We have made rapprochement with Iraq, although we lost many of our youth during the eight-year war. We have also renewed ties with Saudi Arabia despite the martyrdom of our Hajj pilgrims in 1995. So, what is wrong with doing the same thing in regard to Egypt?"[75]

The fact that this issue is of vital importance to one party and of less significance to the other (by virtue of geographical location and level of involvement) further explains why it should not disrupt the course of bilateral relations. Egypt has been militarily absent in the Gulf (with the exception of the 1991 Gulf War) and politically marginal. Egypt has frequently shown signs of acquiesce to the predominance of Saudi Arabia among its Gulf sisters. Hence, the involvement of Cairo in major Gulf issues has more or less gone through the gateway of Riyadh. Moreover, an understanding of the vitality of the issue to Iranian interests was developed. As such, a clash over the initially different views could not possibly be responsible for the friction in bilateral relations.

More importantly, Iran's relations with the UAE itself did not experience the kind of hostility and tension Egyptian-Iranian relations has witnessed over the past two decades. Both countries exchanged ambassadors following the positive gestures President Khatami made after his rise to power. When it comes to business and trade with the Arab world, the UAE

appears by large as the major Arab partner to Iran. In 2001, for example, Iranian-Emirates trade amounted to around $3 billion, or 87.3% of total commercial dealings with all Arab countries[76]. Giving more credit thus to this factor is a mere irony.

Surprisingly, it was Egypt that drove the UAE sometimes to take tougher stances towards the Islamic Republic of Iran. During a visit to Cairo in the mid-1990s, the President of the UAE Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al-Nahyan was induced by the Egyptian leadership to give anti-Iran announcements. The next stop in Nahyan's tour was Syria, where President Hafez Assad and Vice President Abdel-Halim Khaddam rebuked him for giving in to Egyptian demands.

Additionally, Egypt's relations with Israel were maintained in spite of the latter's continued occupation of Arab lands, in Palestine, Syria and Lebanon. Though strained at times, especially during exploding moments, frequently witnessed on the Palestinian-Israeli front, relations were never cut since their inception in 1979. Similarly, Egypt's relations with Turkey and Spain - who have border disputes with Syria and Morocco respectively - were not negatively affected whatsoever as a result of such problems. Also, the occupation of the islands did not stop Sadat from aligning with the Shah in the second half of the 1970s.

It is fair, therefore, to conclude that Egypt's Gulf policy and the Iran-UAE dispute are "not a real stumbling block for Egyptian-Iranian relations"[77].

b- Arab-Israeli Peace Process

The perceptions and attitudes of Iranian and Egyptian policy-makers towards the Middle East peace process that started in Madrid 1991 and was since then pursued by Arab parties are not identical[78], both theoretically and practically[79]. Egypt, on one hand, is the main protagonist of the process. In fact, Egypt, by breaking the Arab boycott of Israel in the late 1970s and conducting direct peace negotiations with Israel, was a pioneer in this regard. Ever since then, Egypt has tried to convince the Arab warriors to put their weapons aside and place their bids on the negotiating table.

Iran, on the other hand, embraces the option of resistance. It considers the act of negotiations to be slippery and futile. When the Madrid Conference was convened in November 1991, Iran broke the Arab consensus by organizing a conference for the support of the Palestinian people. Practically, Iran supports the activities of Hizbullah in Southern

Lebanon and keeps cordial relations with Islamic Palestinian factions (Hamas and Al-Jihad Al-Islami). The success of its Lebanese allies in forcing the Israelis to withdraw their troops from South Lebanon in 2000 and the stalemate the peace process has gone through since the rise of Ariel Sharon to power (2001) convinced Iranians that the strategy of defiance and military confrontation is productive and that any kind of political dialogue with the "enemy" yields no substantive results.

Accordingly, some analysts argued that the Middle East peace process "is *the main obstacle* to a resumption of Iranian-Egyptian relations"[80] (emphasis added). This is not accurate though. Certainly, the opposing approaches had a negative bearing on bilateral relations; especially from Egypt's side since it considers the Arab-Israeli conflict to be a vital issue to its national security and hence continuously seeks solutions to terminate the decades-long conflict. After the last fortresses of Arab rejection (Syria and Libya) have fallen to the tide of peaceful coexistence, Egypt's quest for moderation and compromise was only threatened by Iran's hawkish response to the peace process.

But that in itself does not explain the continued state of tension between Egypt and Iran, for countries with different agendas and policies still keep political affairs unbroken. Agreement on all issues is virtually impossible, even among nations that share lots of commonalities, such as European states whose homogeneity did not inhibit them from differing on so many issues ranging from environmental policies and trade agreements to war on Iraq and combating international terrorism. The norm remains that states keep political relations intact, even if they happen to differ on some issues.

Second, Iran's relations with Syria did not experience any setbacks as a result of the latter's participation in the Madrid Conference and the subsequent multilateral Arab-Israeli negotiation tracks. The same thing could be said about Iran's relations with Jordan, another Arab country who signed a peace treaty with the Jewish state. Likewise, "neither Iran nor the Gulf states have made this issue [the different attitude towards Israel] a public bone of contention between them"[81]. Political analyst Mohamed Idris wondered how Egypt's peace with Israel could be seen as a reason for the stagnation in Egyptian-Iranian relations:

"Some say it is the Camp David Accords. The Important question here is: does Iran oppose the signing of a peace treaty between an Arab state and Israel? Is the signing of such treaties a sufficient reason for inhibiting the development of relations with Egypt? If that was

the case, then why did Iran accept developing its relations with Jordan?...And if that was the case, then how does Iran deal with the Palestinian National Authority that signed the Oslo Agreement with the Jewish state and that seeks negotiating according to the 'Road Map'? And if that was the case, then what is the Iranian position on Syrian President Bashar Assad's call for resuming negotiations with Israel from where it stopped?"[82]

In addition, Iran has over time changed its stubborn stance towards the peace process and, thus, came closer to the Egyptian position. It sensed that it is legitimate for Arab confrontational states to pursue their interests in ways different from Tehran's preferences[83]. Hence, Iran's official criticism of the peace process waned and it also accepted the two-state formula devised as a solution to the decades-long Arab-Israeli conflict[84]. Symptoms of that 'change of heart' were evident as early as April 1994 when Iran sent a non-participating delegation to the Omani capital Muscat, where multilateral talks on water were held with Israeli presence[85].

2- Al-Islambouli Street: Storm in a Teacup

A street in the Iranian capital named after Khaled Al-Islambouli, the army lieutenant who assassinated President Sadat during a military parade in October 1981 caused further friction in Egyptian-Iranian relations. The press, however, overstated the importance of the matter and gave its readers the false impression that the mere name of a street (and the burial of the Shah in Cairo) stand in the way of resuming broken Cairo-Tehran relations. It is true that both constitute "an acknowledged bone of contention between both countries"[86], but their effect on relations was certainly inflated by the press. Dina Ezzat of *Al-Ahram Weekly*, for example, considered both issues to be "*the main stumbling blocks* to the way of improving ties" [87](emphasis added). And Makram Mohamed Ahmed, a prominent Egyptian journalist and former editor-in-chief of *Al-Mussawar*, wrote in a statement combining nothing but exaggeration and simplification: "If Iran lifted the name of Sadat's assassin from the Tehran Street…all elements that obstruct mutual relations will eventually be lifted"[88].

Nevertheless, informal sources from both sides contended that "the reluctance to establish normal relations between both countries is far from being a dispute over the name of a street and the burial of the Shah in Egypt"[89]. The Iranian Vice President Abtahi said in an interview that he did not think that those issues were at all addressed in formal meetings. "I do

not believe that on the official level these issues are even addressed...These are trivial matters", he said[90]. In the same vein, it was reported that the Egyptian President did not bring up the issue in his meeting with President Khatami[91]. On the other hand, an Egyptian diplomat confirmed that Egypt was "never officially requested by the Iranian government to remove the remains of the shah"[92]. Yet, the issue is "usually brought up in the Egyptian press" whenever Egyptian-Iranian meetings on any level take place[93]. And this created the false impression that it actually obstructs the normalization of relations.

In fact, the true effect of the name is on Egyptian intellectuals and it is rather psychological in nature. A large number of Egyptian academics and journalists appreciate the role played by Sadat in Egyptian politics and consider the name a direct offense to him and to Egypt's prestige as well. Yet, the dynamics of formal decision-making function in a different way from the psyche of people. Since when, after all, does the regime of Mubarak, a lifetime pragmatist, follow the dictates of emotions or succumb to the preferences of its thinkers?

Furthermore, many Iranian officials have stated more than once their willingness to change the controversial name. In 1999, Ali Akbar Nateq-Nouri, speaker of the Iranian Parliament and a hardliner, announced that the Iranian government "might not be unanimously opposed to change the offending street name if this would help improve relations with Egypt"[94]. Egypt's Foreign Minister, Amr Moussa, reciprocated by describing the statements as "very positive"[95]. And when Nateq-Nouri came under fire of ultra-extremist elements, he reiterated his position. According to an Egyptian diplomat:

"When Nateq-Nouri, who is not exactly on the moderate side of the Iranian establishment, made these statements a few weeks ago, he came under verbal attack from the ultra-hardliners…So, for him to repeat these statements now, means that the Iranian government, both moderates and hardliners, share the same position"[96].

Ultra-hardliners attempted to hamper the slight improvement in Egyptian-Iranian relations by placing a five-floor-wall-painting of Al-Islambouli in the street. Nateq-Nouri, however, emphasized to an Egyptian parliamentary delegation that the action "was the work of some irresponsible boys"[97]. Also, Ayatollah Mohajerani, a senior Iranian official, stated that:

"The view of the government and the Supreme National Security Council is to move toward a comprehensive rebuilding of ties with Egypt…The move was a clear expression of

the poor taste of [a certain group] at a time when we had Egyptian guests in Tehran and a good suitable atmosphere of cooperation had taken shape"[98].

An Iranian diplomat, moreover, confirmed that this "is nothing that the Iranian government approves of, not at all. We are going to do all that we can to make sure that this situation is changed soon"[99].

The concrete proof that the street affair is not of much significance is that the name was actually changed in January 2004, yet relations have remained disconnected. Following the positive atmosphere surrounding the Mubarak-Khatami meeting in December 2003, the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs demanded the name change from the Tehran City Council, dominated by right-wing conservatives. The latter held a meeting during which the majority of votes approved the decision[100]. The current Iranian President, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, played a positive role towards the achieving of that result[101].

Consequently, experts on Egypt and Iran contended that the issue of the name is far from being accountable for the chronic drop in Egyptian-Iranian relations. According to a senior Egyptian diplomat with wide expertise in the workings of Egyptian-Iranian relations, the name of the street "is a trivial thing…It is used by Cairo as an excuse, nothing more". Idris states that "there are objective reasons" accountable for the low level of relations, not including the name issue, that was exaggerated by the media in both countries[102]. Likewise, Bur maintains that the name of the street "cannot and should not" inhibit the development of bilateral relations[103].

3- Different Type of Political Systems and Conflicting Ideologies

This factor is based on the widespread assumption that similar political regimes come closer together whereas diverse ones depart, or even clash. The division of the world during the Cold War into two opposing camps, each following a different set of economic and political orientations that stem from a separate paradigm (liberalism and socialism), gave empirical verification to that supposition. The fact that each of Egypt and Iran has a distinct political system and follows a different ideology was claimed to be one of the aspects affecting the normal development of Egyptian-Iranian relations[104]. The ups and downs in political relations throughout the second half of the 20th century did as a matter of fact reflect the similarity/dissimilarity of the policies and postures embraced by the two countries' ruling

elites. Friendly relations, for instance, were maintained in the 1940s and 1970s when the attitudes of their rulers were homogenous and their pattern of international alliances similar. When, however, a revolutionary regime resided in one capital and a conservative status quo in the other, a clash between the two countries seemed inevitable. The deterioration witnessed at the time of Nasser and the Shah and again at the time of Khomeini and Mubarak are two cases in point.

Regime Heterogeneity between Egypt and Iran at the time of President Mubarak still prevails. Despite plenty **of** references to Islam in the Egyptian constitution and laws, the Egyptian state is predominantly secular when it comes to the core of the internal political system as well as the conduct of the country's foreign policy. Islam is merely used as an instrument by policy-makers whenever it feels the need to mobilize people or garner support for policies. In Foreign policy, Islam says Dessouki, "has primarily been a capability and a resource to Egypt's foreign policy. Both 'Abd al-Nasir and Sadat used Islam as an instrument. Islam was more of a rationale or vindication for policy choices, rather than a motivation or a constraint"[105].

The case of Iran is different. The revolution has modeled the country's regime and power structures along the lines of Islam and the clergy, moreover, took over all state institutions[106]. From the moment the initial power struggle was settled in favor of the clergy and probably up till the death of Khomeini, the foreign relations of Iran, indeed, were influenced by religious considerations. Just like any other revolution, the euphoria of religious fanaticism overrode the logic of *realpolitik* and that was responsible for many decisions affecting Iran's relations with its neighbors. By 1987, Iran was at odds with almost all regional countries, such as Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Egypt, Sudan, Morocco, Tunisia, Jordan, North Yemen in addition to Afghanistan and Israel and only Syria could be counted as an ally[107].

The aforementioned divergence may explain why Egyptian-Iranian relations were severed in the first place but they do not, however, explain why they have remained so for twenty five years, for the days of passion have passed and were succeeded, as the story of revolution repeatedly tells, by an era of moderation and pragmatism. Rafsanjani's tenure (1989-1997), for example, witnessed a stark improvement in Iran's relations with Gulf States, European countries and Central Asian Republics. Khatami built on that and managed to take

Iran's foreign relations to new heights. Yet, Egyptian-Iranian relations remained almost stagnant

In fact, rigid ideology, influential as it was at the time of Khomeini's spiritual guidance, did not inhibit the development of a strategic Syrian-Iranian alliance[108]. Not only did Baathists establish the most secular of Arab regimes but they had no tolerance of Islamic opposition. In 1982, Hafez Assad brutally crushed the Muslim Brotherhood's riots in the city of Hama, killing thousands of them. Yet, the Iranians, faced with an Iraqi military threat and a suffocating international isolation, did not have the privilege of turning down their only regional ally. Iranians did not "hesitate to charge that the Muslim Brothers who rebelled in Hama and paid with their lives were the agents of Iraq and Zionism. It was expedient to maintain friendship with Syria, the enemy of Iran's enemy, Iraq"[109]. Other revealing examples of the influence of pragmatic considerations upon foreign-policy decisions go indeed earlier than that, when the revolution was still young. The way the hostage crisis was settled and evidence of oil sales to the United States - the 'Great Satan' - are two cases in point[110]. The Irangate affair, in particular, "illustrated the realists' willingness to compromise and cut deals with those who could assist the Republic's war effort…including with its most rhetorical enemies, the USA and Israel"[111].

In brief, ideology was still used in legitimizing policies and mobilizing the masses, but the actual practice of politics imposed its own logic. It could be argued that the revolution was over, giving way to the reason of the state. Under Rafsanjani and Khatami, ideology was further marginalized. The destruction the eight-year war with Iraq had caused necessitated a break with fighting and confrontations. Rafsanjani's reconstruction at home and reconciliation abroad was the first remedy[112], and his mission achieved remarkable success.

That is not to say that no traces of Islam could be found in Iran's contemporary foreign policy, but rather that its position is sidelined and its impact minimized. If Islamic morals today clash with interests, the latter will most probably prevail. Countless examples prove the existence of such a trend. Iran's reluctance to aid fellow Iraqi Muslims in the face of American aggression (both in 1991 and 2003), its readiness to repudiate Khomeini's verdicts and will in order to improve relations with the Europeans and Saudis, the continued domination of the Arab Emirates' islands (occupied under the Shah) all confirm the rise of reason of state and the decline of religious fervor.

The assertion that different regimes following contrasting ideologies do not relate can not be more misleading than in the case of Egypt and Iran[113]. First, Iran keeps cordial relations with dozens of countries whose regimes are entirely based on secular theories and worldly principles. Iran's principal trade partners are the European Union, a grouping that includes only secular states, and Japan[114]. Egypt, in contrast, keeps full political relations and maintains constant communication with Israel; a state that was originally based on teachings originating from a religious doctrine, ironically not Egypt's Islam. Also, it is interesting to note that strained relations with Iran represent a stark exception to the overall foreign policy of Mubarak's Egypt, which is primarily based on moderation and conciliation with all countries around the world.

4- Public Opinion

The public opinion in Egypt can not be the cause of the apparent official hesitation. An academic symposium discussing Egyptian-Iranian relations concluded that Egypt's people regard and respect Iran no less than they do 'sister' Arab states and many voices favored its membership in the Arab League.[115] A couple of surveys on the perceptions of Egyptian towards the Islamic Republic and developing Egypt's relations with her conducted in September 2000 and February 2001 reached the same findings. In addition to laymen, academics, media personnel, and members of the private and public sectors were questioned. The majority of all interviewees favored a boost in political relations with Iran. The percentage of people approving closer ties with Iran was 79.8% and 82.3% in the first and second surveys respectively. The percentage increased to 97% for media personnel and 95% for public sector employees (See appendix, VA). Similar answers were given in response to the question of developing economic ties with Iran. The percentage of interviewees approving a boost in economic relations was 95.1%, 96% and 97% for the private sector employees, academics, and media personnel respectively[116]. (See appendix, VB)

VI The Missing Factor: Regime Security

The foregoing discussion demonstrates that none of the factors suggested by the body of literature available on Egyptian-Iranian relations does provide a convincing answer to the question why formal diplomatic relations between Egypt and Iran have been broken for such a

long period, despite the immense economic and strategic advantages associated with its official resumption. An alternative explanation is therefore needed. Yet, before going into that, a closer look at the notion of the 'export of revolution' is required.

Export of Revolution:

The Egyptian leadership has since the outbreak of the Iranian revolution accused the Islamic Republic of Iran of sponsoring terrorist activities and providing support for radical Islamic groups in Egypt[117]. For this factor to be put in proper context, a number of observations are noteworthy.

First, on the theoretical level, Khomeini endorsed the export of the Iranian revolution to the rest of the world. In a speech given in 1980 on the occasion of the new Iranian year, he clearly expressed his viewpoint on this matter:

> "We should try hard to export our revolution to the world. We should set aside the thought that we do not export our revolution, because Islam does not regard various Islamic countries differently and is the supporter of all the oppressed peoples of the world…If we remain in an enclosed environment we shall definitely face defeat"[118].

The export of revolution, however, would be accomplished only by example and propaganda, not by sword. In an address given to Iranian ambassadors, he clearly stated that:

> "*It does not take swords to export this ideology. The export of ideas by force is no export*…You should promote this idea by adopting a conduct conducive to the propagation of Islam and by publishing the necessary publications in your countries of assignment. This is a must. You must have publications. You must publish journals"[119] (emphasis added)

Along the same lines, Ayatollah Montazeri stated that he wants Iran to:

"become an example to others and no doubt it would influence all the Third World countries and Islamic states, and willingly and unwillingly they would follow our example. *That is all we have to do…to make our country a model…This is the meaning of exporting the revolution*. You do not need to export the revolution."[120] (emphasis added)

Other Iranian officials expressed similar views. Former Iranian Prime Minister Mir-Husayn Mussavi, for example, asserted:

"We have declared time and again that we have no intention of interfering in other countries' internal affairs"[121].

Second, some Iranian hard-line officials were involved in a number of destabilizing activities against Iranian dissidents in Europe. Yet, the subversive Iranian activities declined with the passage of time and the shift in priorities, and were eventually brought to a halt by the 1990s. According to Hassan Abu-Talib, political analyst at Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, Iranians in the mid 1990s started to signal "a good indication that they had stopped their relations with most of the radical Islamist groups in other countries"[122]. And after Khatami became president, the trend towards moderation was extensively reinforced. Today, exporting the revolution has no doubt become a pure cultural matter[123]. Nevertheless, confusing the cultural and security dimensions of exporting the revolution still prevails in Egypt. The distorted Egyptian perceptions thus continue to poison the country's relations with Iran.

Third, no solid link has been established between Egyptian Islamic groups and Iran, despite the many accusations made by Egyptian authorities. Many reasons explain this. To start with, the Iranian version of Political Islam is not appealing to Egypt's Islamic groups due to its Shi'ite nature. Shi'ism is seen by many Egyptian Sunni scholars as synonymous to extremism, or even heresy. So, the shi'ite doctrine is naturally isolated. Hence, Iran's only chance of spreading its ideology in the Arab world would be among the fertile Shi'ite communities, in the Gulf, Iraq and Lebanon.

Furthermore, political developments that followed the revolution rendered cooperation between Iran and Egyptian Islamists rather difficult. Certainly, the Iranian Revolution was at first welcomed among some Egyptian Islamists. Seen as a God-sent gift, it gained the sympathy of these Egyptian Islamic groups who spontaneously raised the pictures of Khomeini in their demonstrations at university campuses, shouted its slogans and denounced the arrival of the deposed Shah in Cairo. To them, the triumph of the revolution meant that success in the struggle against tyrannical dictators would indeed be possible. On the eve of the revolution, Islamic writer Safinaz Kazim said: "Iran fulfilled our dream; Iranians are ruling themselves"[124]. In fact, for some Egyptians, Iran "represented a solution, an alternative model, and a successful one at that. It was an Islamic state with institutions, rulers, ideology, and popular support"[125].

However, when the first Gulf War erupted, Egypt fully supported the Iraqi side, morally and physically. The Egyptian public too favored Iraq, a fellow Arab country believed to be defending Arab land against Persian expansionism. Amidst such an atmosphere, "any expression of sympathy with Khomeini's ideology…came close to treason"[126]. The Muslim Brotherhood, just like all political forces, followed the tide:

"(T)o show any understanding for the Iranian position went against the consensus of the Egyptian religious and political establishment and Egyptian pubic opinion…It is difficult indeed to imagine the Muslim Brothers and their heirs dissociating themselves from a broad consensus"[127].

In addition to the impact of the Sunni-Shiite divergence and the Iran-Iraq war, several other reasons disrupted Iran's relations with Egypt's Islamists after the initial welcoming of the revolution and the short honeymoon that followed. They were pointed out by Abbas Khameh Yar in his useful study on the relationship between Iran and the Muslim Brotherhood:

1- The conservative nature of the Muslim Brotherhood was at odds with the radical and emphatic stances adopted by the leaders of the Islamic revolution.

2- Since the late 1970s, the Muslim Brotherhood has been busy with its heated conflict with the Egyptian state as well as the recurrent splits that occurred within its ranks.

3- The Group had developed extensive economic ties with religious Sunni elements inside Saudi Arabia. Any alliance with Tehran would have certainly cut down an indispensable source of finance.

4- Iran's alliance with the Syrian regime that brutally suppressed Syria's Brotherhood angered the Egyptian Muslim Brothers. Other policies and developments like the bloody encounters between different Iranian factions that followed the revolution, the summary executions carried out against 'enemies of the revolution' and the media reports that gave details on the harassment of Iranian Sunnis further increased the rift between Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood and the Iranian Revolution.

5- The media coverage of Iran was limited.[128] The country "almost vanished from the Egyptian popular memory in this decade. Diplomacy ceased, trade ebbed, and cultural and intellectual exchanges almost disappeared"[129].

In brief, the real spillover effect of the Iranian revolution was "to awaken the Islamic militants in Egypt and heighten the distinctions between 'establishment Islam' and 'revolutionary Islam'. The Islamic Revolution in Iran also became a subject of intensive analysis and scrutiny by many Egyptian Islamic scholars"[130]. These scholars studied the revolution and investigated its contribution to Islam. Their positions varied from hailing the revolution and emphasizing its relevance to Egypt, to belittling its genuineness and underscoring its Shia character. Yet, military cooperation - despite all allegations - was absent. Here, one has to notice too - as the author of an important book on decision-making in Iran reminds - that Iran is, after all, a Third World country whose financial capabilities do not allow her to support all Islamic movements all over the world, as many of Egypt's politicians and intellectuals tend to believe. To Iranian political elites, priority definitely goes to supporting movements that are directly engaged with Israel, such as Hamas, Al-Jihad and Hizbullah.[131]

Fourth, the Iranian authorities showed over time more understanding to Egyptian security sensitivities. From the 1990s and onwards, Iran handed Egypt a number of terrorists who were convicted in Egyptian courts, the most notable of whom was Mustafa Hamza who had been sentenced to death three times in Egypt and Ahmed Hussein Egeiza, a leading member of the Islamic group Talae' Al-Fateh [132].

At the same time, the Iranian government sought to assure its Egyptian counterpart that Iran's alleged support of radical Islamic groups in Egypt is a fictitious charge. According to a senior Egyptian diplomat in Tehran, "Iranian officials asked me several times to provide them with the proof (of Iran's suspected link with Egyptian opposition groups). Rafsanjani, in particular, told me: tell the President I do not interfere in Egypt's internal affairs, and if your folks have any evidence of that, let them show it to me, but Cairo never did. Not only that, but on a visit to Cairo, the German Chancellor asked for evidence on that same connection. Egyptians told him: We will *Inshaa Allah* (God willing), but they never did too." This, the diplomat added, means one thing: "Egypt has no evidence."

Still, to many observers, the "security files…is (are) believed to be the real culprit"[133].

Regime Security

As in all other vital foreign policy decisions in Egypt, the veto over renewing relations with Iran came from the presidency, for the diplomatic leadership (i.e. the Foreign Ministry) "believes that Iranian support for Islamic fundamentalism is on a very low level, permitting Egypt to resume relations with it"[134]. As a matter of fact, the ministry has been a staunch supporter of thawing the relationship with Tehran. As early as 1994, reports sent from the Egyptian Interest Section in Tehran recommended putting an end to media campaigns and working out a political settlement with Iranians. Senior diplomats, including Minister Amr Moussa, backed the recommendation and worked on translating it into concrete action. This culminated in proposing a visit to Cairo by the Iranian President, Mohamed Hashimi Rafsanjani, during which all bilateral problems would be openly discussed in the hope that a breakthrough would materialize thereafter. President Mubarak objected, however. According to a credible informant, "Moussa exerted great effort on this issue. He tried to get an approval from the President on the visit for one whole month. These efforts were dealt a severe blow when an-anti Iran announcement was made in Cairo. Everything stopped afterwards"

In the years that followed, the stand of the ministry toward Iran remained committed to the notion of dissolving tension and searching for ways to build trust to ultimately resume full diplomatic relations with Iran. Most recently, in the summer of 2006, the Foreign Minister, Ahmed Abu El-Gheit, wrote in an internal memorandum distributed among senior diplomats:

"Talk is spread now on the security of the (Persian) Gulf, the position of Iran and the issue of negotiating with Iran (or not) on developments in the Middle East. For this purpose, I would like to form a small working group to study the file of 'Iran and the Gulf'…and submit its recommendations to the minister (Abu El-Gheit)…soon."

The group that was formed consisted of a number of senior diplomats, including several assistants to the minister. On the 10th of June, they finished their report that integrated in its final recommendation the following passage:

"Working on thawing Egyptian-Iranian relations: A consensus emerged among attendees on the importance of that, and the importance of preserving permanent channels of communication on the bilateral level, and *breaking with the 'security complex' that has determined the outlook to the Iranian file up till now*." (Emphasis added)

The security apparatus did not approve the suggestion. Aside from any national political considerations, security personnel are concerned with their job, the success in which

requires, first and foremost, the preservation of order and the prevention of any terrorist attacks or subversive activities. Sometimes, the overstated sense of security stands in the way of sound political rationale, for intelligence and police officers, according to a senior diplomat, "do not have the same scope of diplomats. They are rigid, one track-minded and stick to their opinion. They do not have the flexibility to listen to other opinions."[135]

Hence, many of the differences between diplomats and officers stem from the incongruence between "the logic of security" and "the logic of politics". A retired ambassador criticized the mindset of these officers with whom he had dealt for decades: "The security apparatus shall serve the cause, and not vice versa. In other words, security agencies should tell me how to get to the point 'x', rather than tell me not to go to the point 'x'" Something of that nature happened with regard to their opinion of the kind of relationship Egypt should have with Iran. To avoid unnecessary trouble and, as a top diplomat contends, "to relieve themselves of the added responsibilities that would follow if relations were resumed." security institutions recommended not resuming relations with Iran. To them, allowing thousands - and maybe millions - of Iranians to visit Egypt annually is a nightmarish scenario. Ironically, the same kinds of reservations were voiced by these same agencies in the late 1970s when an Egyptian-Israeli peace agreement seemed imminent. Not having either the resources or the willingness to monitor thousands of Israelis who could, during their stay in Egypt, make contacts with opposition groups or arrange for subversive actions was worrying, and instead of trying to deal with the challenge in a creative way, they preferred shelving the whole subject.

Resuming diplomatic relations with Iran seemed close several times, but never came about due to presidential inclination to accept the advice of security aides at the expense of diplomats' expertise. As a high-ranking official asserted, security organizations "certainly exaggerate in their precautions", but Mubarak, he reminds, "also has a very high sense of security." So, the political leadership, with an eye on its own security and hence long-term survival, does not want to take risks. The cycle here is completed. The security establishment has a vested interest in keeping Iran at arm's length, so it strives to make a bogey out of Iran and warns the President of the detrimental effects of bridging gaps with it. The President, as explained in chapter three, is too much attentive to matters that are security-related, so he gives them more leverage in the decision-making process. A good example in this regard is

related to the issue of telephone calls from Egypt to Iran which have been blocked by security orders since the revolution. Twice (in the years 2002 and 2005) Iranian officials raised this point with Mubarak and demand a lifting of this unnecessary measure, and Mubarak in both meetings agreed and called on his assistants to execute them. Yet, to the surprise of Iranians, presidential orders were not carried out; calling Tehran, Esfahan or Shiraz from Cairo or Alexandria is still unfeasible.[136] It makes sense to believe that Mubarak's security consultants objected to the idea on the basis that such a measure would open gates of trouble and that Mubarak thought their point was valid.

When the leadership is too cautious and careful as in the case of Hosni Mubarak, then 'risks' - an undisputed feature of life and polity - are avoided at any cost. This risk-avoiding attitude becomes a culture and a way of life, permeating all policies and decisions.

As explained in chapter three, the Islamist danger has always been seen by Mubarak as the most formidable threat to his regime. His predecessor was assassinated while celebrating his day of victory among his loyal 'boys'. In fact, Mubarak was sitting just next to Sadat when more then hundred bullets penetrated his body. So from his very first day in office, Muabark realized the extent of the Islamists' power and the dangers inherent in lenient responses. Accordingly, the military establishment - the only viable instrument of political change in the Third World and hence a prime target for Islamists - is regularly purged; elements whose loyalty to the regime is questioned and potential sympathizers with Islamists are dismissed.

The confrontations that broke out once again between radical Islamic factions and the regime further intensified Mubarak's security concerns. The violent clashes that escalated in the late 1980s and early 1990s harvested thousands of lives and exposed Mubarak to many assassination attempts, including the very close try in Addis Ababa. In 1993, a National Intelligence Estimate representing the input of all American intelligence agencies expected that: "Islamic fundamentalist terrorists will continue to make gains across Egypt, leading to the eventual collapse of the Mubarak government"[137].

Mubarak's personal and regime security were profoundly threatened. An ultra-cautious personality, he took all measures necessary to thwart the Islamic risk and maintain his rule. In a chapter on reform strategies in the Arab world in *Political Liberalization and Democratization in the Arab World*, Daniel Brumberg describes the various political and

economic methods employed by Arab regimes to maintain their control, including Mubarak's Egypt[138].

When it comes to political liberalization, Mubarak frequently spoke of "democracy in doses". He argued that "suddenly and totally opening up the political system could destabilize social and political life"[139]. In other words, Stability is preferred to perceived volatility. In February 1987, Mubarak said: "We are providing doses of democracy in proportion to our ability to absorb them"[140].

Numerous as they are, survival strategies are not confined however to domestic policies, but traces of the 'survival mentality' stretch to imprint foreign relations as well. According to Mohamed Ayoob, "security considerations dominate domestic as well as the foreign policies of Third World states"[141]. Egypt's relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran are one of the manifestations of the prevalence of this culture.

Mubarak preferred to keep Iran at an arm's length for states, as Stephen Walt explains, balance threats not powers. If states ally against power only, one would expect Egypt to balance Israel, the most powerful of Egypt's neighbors. But Israel does not pose a threat to Egypt and its regime. A peace treaty that is guaranteed by the United States and the absence of Israeli interference in Egypt's domestic affairs is suffice to comfort the Egyptian leadership. The Islamic Republic, on the other hand, is perceived with a mixture of suspicion and mistrust by the ruling elite in Cairo[142]. A study conducted by Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies on the outlook of Egyptian parties (both legal and underground) regarding foreign policy issues showed that whereas the majority of these parties consider Israel as the primary threat to Egypt, the NDP sees Iran as one of three countries that threaten Egyptian national security.[143] Inevitably, thus, Egyptian-Iranian relations are continuously seen by the Egyptian leadership through "security" lenses rather the political or economic perspectives[144]. On that, Hassan Nafaa, Professor of Political Science at Cairo University, writes that the file of Egyptian-Iranian relations has been dealt with in Cairo according to personal perceptions and visions that are based on obsessions and hypotheses and maybe illusions, more than according to scientific analysis that is based on facts and concrete information[145].

The level of threat is in part determined by the aggressive intentions, real or perceived, of others. The heavy weight of security considerations and the greater role given to the security apparatus in dealing with Iran as well as the deep-rooted distrust of the latter's real

intentions led to a series of political blunders. In early 1985, for example, Egyptian security forces announced the uncovering of an Islamic underground group, sponsored by Iran. However, the "only evidence of the alleged Iranian link with Islamic movements in Egypt was that photographs of Ayatollah Khomeieni were discovered by the security agents in the search of Islamic militants' homes"[146]. Nevertheless, Egypt accused the two remaining Iranian diplomats in Cairo of collaborating with Islamic groups, and expelled them as well, and closed the Iranian Interest Section at the Cairo Swiss Embassy[147]. Similarly, Egypt reacted to the bizarre news of mining the Red Sea and the Suez Canal by blaming Iran and Libya. A few months later, Egypt absolved Iran of any connection to the affair[148]. The two examples show that inherent doubts, suspicions and fears overcame rational thinking. Threats, real or perceived, provoke other states to balance against them, contends Walt. In brief, perceptions of insecurity rather than insecurity per se explain the Egyptian attitude towards Iran. The finger-pointing attitude is very much similar to the typical reactions taken nowadays in the wake of any terrorist action worldwide: blaming Bin Laden and groups associated with Al-Qaeda for it, even if no solid proof of such allegation was found.

The advantages that could be reaped were relations restored with Iran did not influence the Egyptian decision. Understanding foreign policy decisions of Third World countries requires - as David points out - knowledge of the interests of leaders, not the interests of the nation[149]. One should focus on "what is in the best interests of the leaders and not of what is in the best interests of the state"[150]. Moreover, if both interests clash, the decision taken will favor the leader (or the ruling coalition) and harm the national interest:

"when a leadership is confronted with a choice between aligning so as to benefit the state but endangering its hold on power or aligning in such a way that harms the state but preserves its power, it will choose the latter"[151].

Fouad Serag Eddin, Head of the New Wafd Party and a politician with a long experience in the corridors of Egyptian politics, agrees. In Egypt, as in the rest of countries ruled by authoritarian regimes, "the security of the regime outweighs the security of people. Decisions are taken basically to protect the ruler, his interests and authority"[152], he says. Likewise, Sufi Abu-Taleb, head of the People's Assembly at Sadat's time, argues that a strong link exists between any decision taken in Egypt and security. He adds that in the preparation process of any decision, "the first thing considered is the effect of that decision on the security

of the ruling regime…Securing the regime is the first objective of any decision"[153]. That is why a CEO of a public-sector company in the 1960s was sacked because he raised the price of salt. The poor manager did not know that a high salt price was one of the causes of the French Revolution[154]. The theory of David and the words of Egyptian politicians could not be better proved than by Mubarak's reluctance to re-establish Egypt's diplomatic relations with Iran.

The case of Egyptian-Iranian relations, furthermore, shows that domestic threats are more important than external ones for the threat of Iran is, no doubt, not an external threat. For understandable geographical and political factors, Iran can not and will not pose a direct military threat to Egyptian territories. Rather, the threat of Iran, as perceived by Egyptian policy-makers, is filtered through Egypt's domestic setting, in particular the presence of a hostile Islamic opposition. It was this internal threat that prompted Mubarak to be concerned of Iranian objectives and prefer to keep Iran out of the Egyptian orbit.

However, the threat of Iran was not overpowering; the aggregate power and offensive power of the Islamic Republic (measured vis-à-vis Egyptian capabilities) could be dealt with by Cairo. Moreover, the availability of regional and international allies that Egypt could rely upon helped her in deciding to balance Iran.

David's omnibalancing theory is also evident in the case of Mubarak's struggle against his internal opponents. Mubarak decided to appease international players and crush domestic rivals. In his enlightening book *America and Political Islam*, analyst Fawaz Gerges explains how Mubarak planned to enlist US assistance in his fight against radical Islamists. He tried to portray the internal power struggle as the manifestation of an international campaign orchestrated and funded by Iran and Sudan. "We are confronting foreign plots and attempted intervention"[155], announced Mubarak. According to Gerges:

"Mubarak felt assured that his attempt to implicate Iran and Sudan in the internal violence in Egypt would find receptive ears in the United States, which has branded the two countries as "rogue" and "terrorist" states."[156]

Upon knowing about secret contacts made with Islamic groups, he warned the United States of trusting these groups: "I can assure you, these groups will never take over this country; and they will never be on good terms with the United States."[157] Instead of opening channels of communication with terrorists, Mubarak emphasized, the US should play "a tough role" in setting the Islamic genie back again into the bottle[158]. Also, in April 1993, the director

of the CIA, James Woolsey paid a visit to Egypt, during which Mubarak "warned him about Iranian-backed Islamic groups which − according to him − undermined stability in the Middle East, especially in Egypt and the Persian Gulf (*The Age*, 19 April 1993). He argued along the same lines when he visited the Gulf leaders in May to shore up support for his drive against the danger of Islamic fundamentalism"[159].

Conclusion

The chapter attempted to examine Egyptian-Iranian relations, in particular the dilemma of why political relations have been severed and why Egypt has repeatedly shown its reluctance to reestablish diplomatic relations with the Islamic Republic. The body of literature was reviewed and its deficiency verified. A different perspective was, moreover, used to analyze the problematic case study.

Mubarak decided to keep Iran at arm's length primarily because he is concerned about the security of his regime against the critical threat of Islamic fundamentalism. To this effect, strategic, political and economic benefits were forsaken without hesitation. In addition, both Iranian attempts to rapprochement and advice of aides were ignored. The case study, therefore, highlights two basic things about Mubarak's Egypt: the primacy of the President in decision-making and the primacy of the advice of security agencies in the President's calculations.

Appendix

TABLE I

EGYPTIAN-IRANIAN TRADE (FROM 1997 TO SEPTEMBER, 2000)

(IN MILLION DOLLARS)

	Egyptian Exports to Iran	Egyptian Imports from Iran
1997	5	5.1
1998	0.2	4.8
1999	0.4	12.8
January-September, 2000	0.22	11.1

Source: Ahmed Al-Sayyed Al-Naggar, "Egyptian-Iranian Economic Relations," in *Developing Egyptian Iranian Relations*, ed. Mohamed Al-Saeed Idris (Cairo: Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, 2002), 312; Ahmed Al-Sayyed Al-Naggar, *Egypt, Iran and Turkey: Economic Realities and European Relations* (Cairo: Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, 2003), 180.

Original Source:
Ministry of Economy and Foreign Trade, Egypt.

TABLE II (A)

CHANGE IN IRAN'S TRADE (1990 & 2000): EXPORTS

Country	Exports In 1990	Percentage of Total Iranian Exports In 1990	Exports In 2000	Percentage of Total Iranian Exports In 2000

Egypt	-	-	16	0.1%
Turkey	446	2.9%	816	3%
UAE	154	1%	2056	7.5%
Holland	919	5.9%	989	3.6%
Belgium	882	6%	77	0.3%
Greece	343	2.22%	1164	4.2%

Source: Ahmed Al-Sayyed Al-Naggar, *Egypt, Iran and Turkey: Economic Realities and European Relations* (Cairo: Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, 2003), 177.

Original Source:

IMF, Direction of Trade Statistics Yearbook 1994-2001.

TABLE II (B)

CHANGE IN IRAN'S TRADE (1990 & 2000): IMPORTS

Country	Imports In 1990	Percentage of Total Iranian Imports In 1990	Imports In 2000	Percentage of Total Iranian Imports In 2000
Egypt	4	0.03%	-	-
Turkey	545	3.4%	236	1.5%
UAE	1044	6.57%	998	6.2%
Holland	542	3.4%	238	1.5%
Belgium	376	2.4%	312	1.9%
Greece	21	0.1%	11	0.1%

Source: Ahmed Al-Sayyed Al-Naggar, *Egypt, Iran and Turkey: Economic Realities and European Relations* (Cairo: Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, 2003), 177.

Original Source:

IMF, Direction of Trade Statistics Yearbook 1994-2001.

TABLE III (A)

IRAN'S TRADE WITH THE ARAB WORLD

(IRANIAN EXPORTS IN MILLION DOLLARS)

(FROM 1987 TO 1999)

	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99
Morocco	-	-	-	-	22	156	173	-	158	1	3	91	90
Tunisia	6	9	21	9	13	6	5	1	1	2	3	1	8
Bahrain	7	7	7	7	6	7	26	27	7	4	4	15	15
Egypt	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3	2	-	1	4	12
Jordan	2	2	3	2	10	6	4	3	5	2	1	1	1
Kuwait	16	18	17	11	-	-	64	106	59	36	30	66	94
Lebanon	-	-	-	-	-	-	32	32	21	16	15	27	27
Libya	-	1	-	3	-	-	1	14	24	10	5	3	3
Oman	-	-	-	-	-	1	9	7	7	6	3	22	36
Qatar	-	-	-	7	13	14	27	35	13	9	9	9	10
Saudi Arabia	27	4	1	-	1	8	18	31	12	39	38	60	69
Syria	186	54	84	30	1	11	12	23	6	5	13	29	29
UAE	133	115	140	154	154	169	352	780	809	695	775	295	322
Yemen	15	15	17	21	11	12	2	4	7	8	1	1	-

Source: Ahmed Al-Sayyed Al-Naggar, "Egyptian-Iranian Economic Relations," in *Developing Egyptian Iranian Relations*, ed. Mohamed Al-Saeed Idris (Cairo: Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, 2002), 311.

TABLE III (B)

IRAN'S TRADE WITH THE ARAB WORLD

(IRANIAN IMPORTS IN MILLION DOLLARS)

(FROM 1987 TO 1999)

	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99
Morocco	-	-	14	57	32	28	69	47	27	34	61	29	28
Tunisia	18	8	52	29	39	34	3	9	12	33	36	34	37
Bahrain	4	-	3	7	7	8	38	189	60	129	59	63	62
Egypt	-	3	3	5	1	3	3	1	-	-	2	-	-
Jordan	-	-	-	1	54	32	14	7	24	31	9	9	9
Oman	6	2	2	192	192	211	1	-	3	1	-	176	132
Saudi Arabia	10	13	88	7	73	80	73	23	21	77	55	77	83
UAE	390	276	949	1044	1044	1148	1120	647	441	473	562	551	600

Source: Ahmed Al-Sayyed Al-Naggar, "Egyptian-Iranian Economic Relations," in *Developing Egyptian Iranian Relations*, ed. Mohamed Al-Saeed Idris (Cairo: Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, 2002), 311.

TABLE IV

DIRECT INVESTMENT IN EGYPT TILL 30/6/2001

Country	Volume of Direct Investments in Egypt (in million LE)	Percentage to Total Volume of Direct Investments	Number of Companies in Egypt	Percentage to Total Number of Companies

Belgium	394	1.3%	21	0.6%
Ireland	397	1.3%	11	0.3%
Luxemburg	439	1.5%	41	1.1%
Spain	274	0.9%	22	0.6%
Denmark	154	0.5%	17	0.5%
Sweden	126	0.4%	25	0.7%
Saudi Arabia	4666	15.4%	563	14.7%
Kuwait	3624	12%	201	5.3%
UAE	1295	4.3%	94	2.5%
Libya	1130	3.7%	90	2.4%
Iran	108	0.4%	8	0.2%

Source: Ahmed Al-Sayyed Al-Naggar, *Egypt, Iran and Turkey: Economic Realities and European Relations* (Cairo: Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, 2003), 115.

Original Source:
The General Agency for Investment and Free Zones in Egypt.

Table V (A)

EGYPT: PERCENTAGE APPROVING DEVELOPING POLITICAL TIES WITH IRAN

Public Sector	Private Sector	Academic Sector	Media Sector	People (1st Survey)	People (2nd Survey)
95	96.1	94.1	97	79.8	82.3

Source: Sobhi Essela, "Egyptians' Perceptions of Egyptian-Iranian Relations," *Mukhtarat Iraniah* 2 (August 2001): 51.

TABLE V (B)

EGYPT: PERCENTAGE APPROVING DEVELOPING ECONOMIC TIES WITH IRAN

Public Sector	Private Sector	Academic Sector	Media Sector	People (1st Survey)	People (2nd Survey)
91	95.1	96	97	83.9	84.8

Source: Sobhi Essela, "Egyptians' Perceptions of Egyptian-Iranian Relations," *Mukhtarat Iraniah* 2 (August 2001): 51.

[1]Yunan Labib Rizk, "Iranian Relations with Egypt and Iraq under the Pahlavi Dynasty, 1925-1979," in *Arab-Iranian Relations* (Cairo: Institute of Arab Research and Studies, 1993), 106.

[2]Nour Eldin Al-Ali, "Egypt and Iran throughout History," in *Cultural Ties between Iran and Egypt*, ed. Nour Eldin Al-Ali (Cairo: Iranian Cultural Center, 1978); Saeed Al-Sabagh, *The Relationship between Cairo and Tehran: Competition or Cooperation?* (Cairo: Al-Dar Al-Thaqafia lilnashr, 2003), 15-18; Hamid Bayat, "Heritage of Past and Horizons of Future" *Mukhtarat Iraniah* 1 (September 2000): 21.

[3]Al-Sabagh, *The Relationship between Cairo and Tehran*, 31.

[4]Iranian periodicals in Egypt included *Sorayya*, *Parvaresh*, *Hekma*t and *Chehrenema*.

[5]Al-Ali, "Egypt and Iran throughout History".

[6]Al-Sabagh, *The Relationship between Cairo and Tehran*, 20; Bayat, "Heritage of Past and Horizons of Future", 21

[7]Al-Sabagh, *The Relationship between Cairo and Tehran*, 92.

[8]The same factor played the same role inversely after both countries switched positions; Egypt making peace with Israel and Iran antagonizing it.

[9]Iran vetoed the UN General Assembly's plan for the partition of Palestine (issued on November, 29 1947) but relations between Tel Aviv and Tehran evolved after the reinstatement of the Shah in 1953. (Anoushiravan Ehteshami, "Wheels Within Wheels: Iran's Foreign Policy towards the Arab World," in *Reconstruction and Regional Diplomacy in the Persian Gulf*, ed. Hooshang Amirahmadi and Nader Entessar (London & New York, 1992), 157).

[10]The Iranian defacto recognition of Israel in 1950 was repudiated by the government of Mossadeq in June 1951.

[11]Fathi Al-Dib, *Abdel Nasser and the Revolution of Iran* (Cairo: Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, 2000), 93-108.

[12]Hojatollah Judaki, "The Role of Politics and Culture in Iranian-Egyptian Relations from the Revolution of the Free Officers in 1952 to the Success of the Iranian Revolution in 1979," *Mukhtarat Iraniah* 6 (February 2005): 25.

[13]The Shah was in France when the war erupted. An Iranian diplomat at the Iranian embassy in Paris wrote that the Shah was extremely happy with the news of Israeli advances and Egyptian losses. Another Iranian source

wrote that the Shah jumped into the air out of joy when the news of Nasser's "humiliation" was confirmed. He later told the Israeli Foreign Minister Aba Iban that he celebrated Israel's victory by distributing golden coins to his friends (Al-Sabagh, *The Relationship between Cairo and Tehran*, 167-8).

[14]Ibid., 186.

[15]Nader Entessar, "The Lion and the Sphinx: Iranian-Egyptian Relations in Perspective," in *Iran and the Arab World*, Ed. Hooshang Amirahmadi and Nader Entessar (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), 165.

[16]Asef Bayat and Bahman Baktiari, "Revolutionary Iran and Egypt: Exporting Inspirations and Anxieties," in *Iran and the Surrounding World: Interactions in Culture and Cultural Politics*, ed. Nikki Keddie and Rudi Matthee (Washington: University of Washington Press, 2002), 307; Entessar, "The Lion and the Sphinx", 165.

[17]Bayat and Baktiari, "Revolutionary Iran and Egypt", 307; Entessar, "The Lion and the Sphinx", 165.

[18]Bayat, "Heritage of Past and Horizon of Future", 23; Fahmy Howeidy, *Arabs and Iran: Illusions of Conflict and Worries of Conciliation* (Cairo: Dar al-Shorouq, 1991), 77.

[19]Entessar, "The Lion and the Sphinx", 165.

[20]Revolutionaries destroyed the regime of the Shah "as much out of a conviction that he was an 'American King' as that he was a tyrant monarch". (R.K. Ramazani, "Khumayni's Islam in Iran's Foreign Policy," in *Islam in Foreign Policy*, ed. Adeed Dawisha (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1983), 10.)

[21]Forging close ties with America and making peace with Israel was the one of the reasons the assassins of President Sadat gave to justify the killing.

[22]Maridi Nahas, "State-Systems and Revolutionary Challenge: Nasser, Khomeini and the Middle East," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 17 (November 1985): 520.

[23]Ehteshami, "Wheels Within Wheels: Iran's Foreign Policy towards the Arab World", 167-8.

[24]Bayat and Baktiari, "Revolutionary Iran and Egypt: Exporting Inspirations and Anxieties", 308.

[25]Ibid.

[26]Ibid.

[27] A well-articulated account of the lifeless relations was given by an Iranian scholar who lived in Egypt for years:

"What remained from Iran were the defunct Iran-Misr Bank, the almost deceased Bank Saderat of Iran, and a few other joint ventures, such as the Misr-Iran Shipping Company and a Suez textile plant. The old glory of a few carpet shops had faded under the dusty "Persian Carpets" sign. Indeed, there hardly remained any really Iranian merchandise. Streets named after Mosaddeq and Iran, and Pahlavi Square, in Cairo's Dokki district, did linger on. But they meant little to passers-by who were caught, perplexed, between the initial inspiration of an Islamic Revolution and subsequent images of "blood-bath," mass execution, and the brutality of the war with "Arab brothers." (Bayat and Baktiari, "Revolutionary Iran and Egypt: Exporting Inspirations and Anxieties", 314)

[28]Adam Tarock, "Iran's Foreign Policy during the Gulf War," in *Remaking the Middle East*, ed. Paul J. White and William S. Logan (Oxford & New York: BERG, 1997), 199.

[29]In international relations, "countries feel less secure with powerful neighbors, so that they try to keep them at arm's length". (Ibid., 210)

[30]Today, the G-15 includes Algeria, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Iran, Jamaica, Kenya, Nigeria, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Venezuela and Zimbabwe. ,

[31]In the years 1994 and 1995, Egypt led a broad diplomatic campaign in an effort to force Israel to sign the NPT. It threatened not to sign unless Israel did. The Egyptian venture, however, eventually failed due to American pressure and inability to mobilize states behind it.

[32]Amira Mohamed Abdel-Halim, "The Fourth Seminar of Egyptian-Iranian Relations: The Regional Repercussions of the American Occupation of Iraq (2/2)," *Mukhtarat Iraniah* 6 (February 2005): 12.

[33]Allowing Israel's military airplanes to use Turkish space, the Turkish-Israeli alliance brought for the first time Israel "right next to the Iranian border" (Tarock, "Iran's Foreign Policy during the Gulf War", 200)

[34]Mohamed Al-Saeed Idris, "Egypt and Iran: From Tension to Tension," *Mukhtarat Iraniah* 5 (December 2004): 4.

[35]Sobhi Essela, "Egyptians' Perceptions of Egyptian-Iranian Relations," *Mukhtarat Iraniah* 2 (August 2001): 47.

[36]Hassan Nafaa, "Mubarak-Khatami Meeting: The Importance of a New Push in Egyptian-Iranian Relations," *Mukhtarat Iraniah* 5 (January 2004): http://acpss.ahram.org.eg/ahram/2001/1/1/C2RN7.HTM.

[37]Bir Mohamed Malazhy, "A look at Khatami-Mubarak Meeting," *Mukhtarat Iraniah* 5 (January 2004): 44.

[38]Ibid.

[39]Nafaa, "Mubarak-Khatami Meeting: The Importance of a New Push in Egyptian-Iranian Relations".

[40]Mohamed Al-Saeed Abdel-Mu'men, "The Roulette of Egyptian-Iranian Relations," *Mukhtarat Iraniah* 6 (January 2005): 28.

[41]Abu Elfadl Salehi Nia. "Egypt and Iran: The Moment of Taking the Decision," *Mukhtarat Iraniah* 5 (March 2004): 44.

[42]Yusry Ahmed Azbawy, "Egyptian-Iranian Relations: New Horizons" *Mukhtarat Iraniah* 5 (February 2004): http://acpss.ahram.org.eg/ahram/2001/1/1/C2RN67.HTM.

[43]In January 2004, Mohamed Al-Saeed Idris wrote in *Al-Ahram* that the improvement of Egyptian-Iranian relations would trigger the development of a new web of regional interactions. The rise of an alliance that includes Egypt, Iran, Syria and Turkey is therefore not ruled out. If formed, this alliance would inhibit the creation of an American-Israeli-Turkish-Iraqi alliance. (Mohamed Al-Saeed Idris, "From Damascus and Ankara to Cairo and Tehran: A Web of New Regional Interactions, How and Why?," *Al-Ahram*, 28 January 2004, http://www.ahram.org.eg/archive/Index.asp?CurFN=file1.htm&DID=8014.) In the same direction, Al-Bishry advocated the emergence of an Egyptian-Iranian-Turkish triangle, arguing that the cultural bonds linking the peoples of these countries is stronger than those uniting European nations (Tarek Al-Bishry, "The Arab-Iranian-Turkish Triangle", 5).

[44]In 1999, Mohamed Sadiq Al-Husseini, a close assistant to President Mohamed Khatami, wrote in one widely-circulating Iranian newspaper (*Al-Wifaq*) that "there is an increasing awareness in Iranian political circles that relations with Egypt are of prime importance." (Dina Ezzat, "What's in a Name?," *Al-Ahram Weekly*, 24 June 1999, http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/1999/435/eg11.htm.)

[45]"Iran, Egypt Move toward Normal Relations." *CNN*, 6 January 2004, http://edition.cnn.com/2004/WORLD/meast/01/06/iran.egypt.ap/.

[46]Ibid.

[47]Rasha Saad, "Handshake Heard 'Round the Region'," *Al-Ahram Weekly*, 25 December 2003, http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2003/670/eg3.htm.

[48]"Iran, Egypt Move toward Normal Relations."

[49]"Egyptian Relations with Iran and the Challenge of Initiative," *Mukhtarat Iraniah* 5 (February 2004): 18

[50]Ahmed Al-Suyufi, interview by author, 6 May 2006, Cairo, tape recording, Al-Ahram Newspaper, Cairo.

[51]Medhat Hammad, interview by author, 23 April 2006, Cairo, tape recording, Downtown, Cairo.

[52]"Egyptian Relations with Iran and the Challenge of Initiative", 17.

[53]Ahmed Al-Sayyed Al-Naggar, "Egyptian-Iranian Economic Relations," in *Developing Egyptian Iranian Relations*, ed. Mohamed Al-Saeed Idris (Cairo: Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, 2002), 302; Ahmed Al-Sayyed Al-Naggar, *Egypt, Iran and Turkey: Economic Realities and European Relations* (Cairo: Al-

Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, 2003), 100; "Egyptian-Iranian Relations: from Rapprochement to Tension," *Arabonline.org*.

[54]Al-Naggar, "Egyptian-Iranian Economic Relations", 303.

[55]Ibid., p. 305.

[56]Al-Naggar, *Egypt, Iran and Turkey*, 101.

[57]Abdel-Mo'men, "The Roulette of Egyptian-Iranian Relations", 29.

[58]Al-Naggar, *Egypt, Iran and Turkey*, 101.

[59]Mohamed Ezz El-Arab, "Egyptian-Iranian Relations: Politics Lead Economics," *Mukhtarat Iraniah* 5 (June 2004): http://acpss.ahram.org.eg/ahram/2001/1/1/C2RN71.HTM.

[60]Alex Ionides, "Together Again," *Egypt Today*, February 2004, 53.

[61]Mosayab Na'emi is editor-in-chief of Iranian *Al-Vefaq*.

[62]Saad, "Handshake Heard 'Round the Region'".

[63]Al-Naggar, *Egypt, Iran and Turkey*, 103-4.

[64]Mohamed Magdy Morgan, "Egypt and Iran and the Cultural Bond," *Al-Ahram*, 3 May 2006, http://www.ahram.org.eg/archive/Index.asp?CurFN=opin5.htm&DID=8840.

[65]Amira Howeidy, "Doing Business with Tehran," *Al-Ahram Weekly*, 4 November 1999, http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/1999/454/ec3.htm.

[66]Jameela Kadivar, "Whose Problem is the Resumption of Relations between Egypt and Iran?," *Mukhtarat Iraniah* 4 (January 2003): 8.

[67]Interview with an expert at Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies. The interviewee lamented the fact that Abtahi is an Arab descendant and from the House of the Prophet in particular, but was still not allowed to visit Egypt. The authorities, he said, "don't understand these things".

[68]Abdel Monem Said, "From Geopolitics to Geo-Economics: Egyptian National Security Perceptions," in *National Threat Perceptions in the Middle East*, ed. James Leonard et al (New York and Geneva: United Nations, 1995), 24.

[69]Ibid.

[70]Ibid.

[71]On the increasing role of economic factors in Egyptian foreign policy starting from the 1970s onwards see Ali E. Hillal Dessouki, "The Primacy of Economics: The Foreign Policy of Egypt," in *The Foreign Policies of Arab States: The Challenge of Change*, ed. Bahgat Korany and Ali E. Hillal Dessouki (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991); and also Said, "From Geopolitics to Geo-Economics: Egyptian National Security Perceptions".

[72]Iran's population is double that of its Gulf neighbors and it controls half of the waterway's coastal line. As such, excluding it from the Damascus Declaration formula was neither constructive nor workable.

[73]Tarek Atia, "More than a Street Name," *Al-Ahram Weekly*, 26 July 2001, http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2001/544/eg5.htm; Biman Wahab Bur, "Dimensions of Assisting Relations between Egypt and Iran," *Mukhtarat Iraniah* 2 (July 2001): 54; Reza Mu'men Zadeh, "Post-Tension Aspirations," *Mukhtarat Iraniah* 1 (September 2000): 28. Check also what Ahmed Abdel-Fatah from the Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies said in "Egyptian-Iranian Relations: from Rapprochement to Tension," *ArabGate*, http://www.arabgate.com/more/7/تقارير/749/بعد-الاعلان-عن-مخطط-التجسس:-العلاقات-المصرية-الإيرانية..-من-الانفراج-إلى-التوتر/.

[74]Tarock, "Iran's Foreign Policy during the Gulf War", 201.

[75]Yotam Feldner, "Developments in Egyptian-Iranian Relations, Part I: An Apprehensive Rapprochement," *MEMRI (Inquiry and Analysis Series)* no. 37 (14 August 2000): http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=countries&Area=iran&ID=IA3700.

[76]Al-Naggar, *Egypt, Iran and Turkey*, 100.

[77]Yotam Feldner, "Developments in Egyptian-Iranian Relations, Part II: Egyptian Concerns and Ambitions," *MEMRI (Inquiry and Analysis Series)* no. 38 (15 August 2000): http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archives&Area=ia&ID=IA3800.

[78]Nia, "Egypt and Iran: The Moment of Taking the Decision", 46.

[79]Abu-Elqasem Qasem Zadeh. "Regional Developments and their Effect on Iranian-Egyptian Relations," *Mukhtarat Iraniah* 4 (March 2003): 8.

[80]Feldner, "Developments in Egyptian-Iranian Relations, Part I: An Apprehensive Rapprochement".

[81]Tarock, "Iran's Foreign Policy during the Gulf War", 205.

[82]Mohamed Al-Saeed Idris, "Egypt and Iran: Honest Answers for Difficult Questions are Needed," *Mukhtarat Iraniah* 5 (January 2004): 5.

[83]"Egyptian Relations with Iran and the Challenge of Initiative", 21.

[84]Azbawy, "Egyptian-Iranian Relations: New Horizons".

[85]Raymond Hinnebusch and Anoushiravan Ehteshami, *Syria and Iran: Middle Powers in a Penetrated Regional System* (London & New York: Routledge, 1997), 49.

[86]Saad, "Handshake Heard 'Round the Region'".

[87]Dina Ezzat, "A Macabre Situation," *Al-Ahram Weekly*, 10 June 1999, http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/1999/433/eg4.htm.

[88]Saad, "Handshake Heard 'Round the Region'".

[89]Ibid.

[90]Ibid.

[91]"Egyptian Relations with Iran and the Challenge of Initiative", 18.

[92]Ezzat, "A Macabre Situation".

[93]Saad, "Handshake Heard 'Round the Region'".

[94]Ezzat, "A Macabre Situation".

[95]Ibid.

[96]Ezzat, "What's in a Name?"

[97]Gamal Essam El-Din, "Taking Time on Iran," *Al-Ahram Weekly*, 1 July 1999, http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/1999/436/eg11.htm.

[98]Ezzat, "What's in a Name?"

[99]Ibid.

[100]Mohamed Al-Saeed Abdel-Mu'men, "Egypt and Iran: Calculations of Resuming Relations," *Al-Ahram*, 21 January 2004, http://www.ahram.org.eg/archive/Index.asp?CurFN=file3.htm&DID=8007; "Egyptian Relations with Iran and the Challenge of Initiative", 18; "Iran, Egypt Move toward Normal Relations"

[101]Ahmadinejad was then the mayor of Tehran. He explained to members of the Council the importance of relations with Egypt and asked them to deal with that file in a sensitive and rational way. (Abdel-Mu'men, "Egypt and Iran: Calculations of Resuming Relations")

[102]Idris, "Egypt and Iran: Honest Answers for Difficult Questions are Needed", 4.

[103]Bur, "Dimensions of Assisting Relations between Egypt and Iran", 55.

[104]Mohamed Al-Saeed Idris, "Egypt and Iran: From Tension to Tension, Till when?," *Mukhtarat Iraniah* 5 (December 2004): 4.

[105]Ali E. Hillal Dessouki, "The Limits of Instrumentalism: Islam in Egypt's Foreign Policy," in *Islam in Foreign Policy*, ed. Adeed Dawisha (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1983), 85.

[106]Khomeini believed that the 'Ulama' are the heirs of the Prophet. They have inherited the duty to dispense justice on earth (i.e. rule). (Johannes Jansen, "Echoes of the Iranian Revolution in the Writings of Egyptian Muslims," in *The Iranian Revolution and the Muslim World*, ed. David Menashri (Boulder: Westview Press, 1990), 210)

[107]Hinnebusch and Ehteshami, *Syria and Iran*, 42.

[108]For an excellent source on the Syrian-Iranian alliance, see Raymond Hinnebusch and Anoushiravan Ehteshami, *Syria and Iran: Middle Powers in a Penetrated Regional System* (London & New York: Routledge, 1997).

[109]Ramazani, "Khumayni's Islam in Iran's Foreign Policy", 23.

[110]Ibid., 22-3.

[111]Ehteshami, "Wheels Within Wheels: Iran's Foreign Policy towards the Arab World", 191.

[112]In fact, the trend of bridging gaps with former foes started at the late days of Khomeini and was certainly facilitated by the end of hostilities with Iraq. By the end of 1988, Iran managed to improve its relations with all Gulf States, with the exception of Iraq and Saudi Arabia (Hinnebusch and Ehteshami, *Syria and Iran*, 44).

[113]For a good source refuting the common fallacy of linking ideological affiliations with the rise of political alliances in the Middle East see Stephen Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 1987).

[114]Ramazani, "Khumayni's Islam in Iran's Foreign Policy", 30.

[115]Mohamed El-Saeed Idris, *Developing Egyptian Iranian Relations* (Cairo: Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, 2002), 326.

[116]Essela, "Egyptians' Perceptions of Egyptian-Iranian Relations", 48-9.

[117]Bur, "Dimensions of Assisting Relations between Egypt and Iran", 54; Howeidy, "Doing Business with Tehran"; Zadeh, "Post-Tension Aspirations", 28.

[118]Ramazani, "Khumayni's Islam in Iran's Foreign Policy", 19

[119]Ibid.

[120]Ehteshami, "Wheels Within Wheels: Iran's Foreign Policy towards the Arab World", 175.

[121]Ramazani, "Khumayni's Islam in Iran's Foreign Policy", 20.

[122]Ionides, "Together Again", 52.

[123]"Egyptian Relations with Iran and the Challenge of Initiative", 21; Mohamed Al-Saeed Abdel-Mu'men, "The Revolution of Iran and Nasserism" *Mukhtarat Iraniah* 4 (October 2003): http://acpss.ahram.org.eg/ahram/2001/1/1/C2RN50.HTM.

[124]Bayat and Baktiari, "Revolutionary Iran and Egypt: Exporting Inspirations and Anxieties", 311.

[125]Ibid.

[126]Jansen, "Echoes of the Iranian Revolution in the Writings of Egyptian Muslims", 212.

[127]Ibid., 213.

[128]Abbas Khama Yar, *Iran and the Muslim Brotherhood* (Cairo: Al-Hadaf lil-i'lam wa alnashr, 2001), 228-9 & 243-250.

[129]Bayat and Baktiari, "Revolutionary Iran and Egypt: Exporting Inspirations and Anxieties", 314.

[130]Entessar, "The Lion and the Sphinx", 167.

[131]Nevine Mossaad, interview by author, 18 May 2006, Cairo, tape recording, Institute of Arab Research and Studies, Cairo.

[132]Idris, "Egypt and Iran: From Tension to Tension, Till when?", 5; "Egyptian-Iranian Relations: from Rapprochement to Tension"; "Egyptian Relations with Iran and the Challenge of Initiative", 21; Saad, "Handshake Heard 'Round the Region'".

[133]Saad, "Handshake Heard 'Round the Region'".

[134]Feldner, "Developments in Egyptian-Iranian Relations, Part II"; Fahmy Howeidy, interview by author, 1 August 2005, Cairo, tape recording, Al-Ahram Newspaper, Cairo.

[135]A good example of such a mentality occurred during a workshop organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to discuss the issue of Iran and attended by scholars, economists and representatives of different state institutions. Arguing from a security point of view, the representative of the intelligence stated that "there is no problem in exporting to Iran, but no need to import goods from Iran." Other attendees resented the comment. (Mohamed Al-Sayed Selim, interview by author, 15 August 2005, Cairo, tape recording, Center of Asian Studies, Cairo University, Cairo).

[136]Hojatollah Judaki, interview by author, 3 July 2006, Cairo, written notes, The Iranian Embassy, Cairo.

[137]Fawaz Gerges, *America and Political Islam: Clash of Cultures or Clash of Interests*? (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999), 171.

[138]See Danial Brumberg, "Authoritarian Legacies and Reform Strategies in the Arab World," in *Political Liberalization and Democratization in the Arab World. Volume I: Theoretical Perspectives*, ed. Rex Brynen, Bahgat Korany and Paul Noble (Boulder & London: Lynne Rienner, 1993).

[139]Ann Mosely Lesch, "Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy in Egypt," in *Democracy, War and Peace in the Middle East*, ed. David Garnham and Mark Tessler (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1995), 230.

[140]Ibid., 242.

[141]Mohamed Ayoob, *The Third World Security Predicament: State Making, Regional Conflict and the International System* (Boulder & London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1995), 191.

[142]"Egyptian-Iranian Relations: from Rapprochement to Tension"; Idris, "From Damascus and Ankara to Cairo and Tehran: A Web of New Regional Interactions, How and Why?"

[143]Emad Gad, "Egyptian Foreign Policy in the Middle East," *Al-Siyassa Al-Dawliya* 36 (January 2000): 97.

[144]"Egyptian-Iranian Relations: from Rapprochement to Tension"; Kadivar, "Whose Problem is the Resumption of Relations between Egypt and Iran?", 8.

[145]Nafaa, "Mubarak-Khatami Meeting".

[146]Entessar, "The Lion and the Sphinx", 171.

[147]Entessar, "The Lion and the Sphinx", 171; Jansen, "Echoes of the Iranian Revolution", 216.

[148]Entessar, "The Lion and the Sphinx", 171.

[149]I was told by many of my interviewees in Cairo that the political leadership's perception of the security and interests of the ruling elite is tantamount to the security and interests of Egypt. Mubarak does not seem to see any difference between both.

[150]Steven David, "Explaining Third World Alignment," *World Politics* 43, no. 2 (January 1991): 243.

[151]Ibid.

[152]Mohamed Al-Tawil, *How are Decisions Made in Egypt?* (Cairo: n.p., 1993), 34.

[153]Ibid., 37.

[154]Ibid., 36.

[155]Gerges, *America and Political Islam*, 174.

[156]Ibid., 175.

[157]Ibid.

[158]Ibid., 176.

[159]Tarock, "Iran's Foreign Policy during the Gulf War", 207-8.

CHAPTER V
CASE STUDY II
THE EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI-AMERICAN TRIANGLE: FOREIGN POLICY IN THE SERVICE OF REGIME SURVIVAL

Introduction

This chapter examines the series of decisions taken by the Egyptian leadership in late 2004 designed to bolster Cairo's economic and political relationship with Israel, namely the mutual exchange of prisoners and the signing of the Qualified Industrial Zones (QIZ) Treaty. Because Egyptian-Israeli relations have since their inception truly been –with the active involvement of the United States- trilateral, an account of Egyptian-American relations will be first given. Then, an overview of Egyptian-Israeli relations and the different phases they have passed through since the signing of the Camp David Accords in 1978 and the Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty in 1979 till 2004 will be presented. This part will demonstrate that the relationship between Cairo and Tel Aviv over the past quarter of a century has been rightly associated with the term 'Cold Peace', a description that depicts their encounter more than anything else. It also shows that Cairo has been persistently reluctant to develop normal economic relations with the Jewish state. At times, however, the normalization card was used by Egypt in exchange for political gains. The following part puts under focus the abrupt decisions Cairo undertook to transform the hitherto 'Cold Peace' into a warm one and illustrates that they do not conform to the general pattern of Egyptian-Israeli relations. A brief survey of US foreign policy and the changes it underwent after the events of September 11 is then given. The last part of the chapter proves that the logic underlying those decisions was predominantly political, and that they were aimed at improving Cairo's standing in Washington rather than improving its relationship with Israel per se. More specifically, Cairo sought to alleviate the rising American political pressure with regards to political reform and democratization by using the 'Israeli gate'. A final concluding part summarizes the major findings of the chapter.

I Egyptian-American Relations

"A mentality of dependence has set in"
Fouad Ajami, Scholar

This part presents an overview of Egyptian-American relations since the rapprochement that occurred in the aftermath of the October War. Light will be shed on the political, military and economic aspects of the relationship as well as the major milestones embodying these features. Areas of cooperation and bones of contention will also be emphasized.

1- Historical Background (1974-2001): Origins of the US-Egyptian Alliance

After being strained for most of the time under the leadership of Nasser (1954-1970), Egyptian-American relations were fundamentally boosted under Sadat. Many scholars point to the meeting that took place in Cairo just a few weeks after the cease fire between Sadat and the US Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, as the start of communication between both countries, but this is not exactly true. In fact, contacts - and at high levels - predate that meeting. The turn to the West was gradual; it moved slowly from 1971 to October 1973 and then took an accelerated pace after November 1973[1]. In 1971, for example, Sadat received William Rogers, the first US Secretary of State to visit Egypt since 1953. In 1972, he expelled the Soviet military advisors, a decision that was not devoid of overtures to the Americans. During the war, moreover, regular communication took place between Sadat's national security advisor - Hafez Ismail - and Kissinger[2]. Nevertheless, the November 14th meeting with Kissinger undeniably launched a new era in Egyptian-American relations and in the overall American involvement in the Middle East.

After the war, Sadat was preoccupied with the dilemma of how to regain the lost Sinai territories. He recognized that the Soviet Union would be of little use in that respect. Turning to the United States was, therefore, inevitable: "To fight the war, Sadat had needed Moscow. But to reach a settlement of the conflict, he needed Washington."[3] As Sadat himself said: "the Soviet Union can give the Egyptians arms, but only the U.S. can give them a fair solution by which the occupied territories will be restored."[4] But Sadat's turn to the US was not only because he ruled out a military recovery of the Sinai. Personal reasons played a role too. Sadat mistrusted the Soviets, ever since Nasser's days. His speeches on the Soviet Union conveyed feelings of frustration and humiliation. He once depicted the Soviets as "crude and tasteless people."[5]

John Waterbury - an expert on Egyptian politics - argues that there are four axes in Egyptian policy-making that always intersect:

1- Egypt's policy towards superpowers.

2- Egypt's policy towards Israel and Arab countries; both allies and adversaries.

3- Domestic politics and the way they are planned and organized.

4- Domestic Economic Policies, which are always directly related to external financing.

According to Waterbury, "policy changes along any one axis will ineluctably entail changes along all the others"[6]. When Nasser concluded the Czech arms deal in the 1950s, it was axis 1 and 2 that led to changes in 3 and 4. Likewise, Sadat's urge to end Israel's occupation of the Sinai (axis 2) necessitated closer relations with the Americans (axis 1), which in turn brought about the drift towards political liberalization (axis 3) and economic opening (axis 4).

When it comes to the behavior of the post-revolution Egyptian regime, Shimon Shamir points to the "total subordination of the issue of great-power orientation to other issue areas that rank higher in its priorities"[7], namely national goals and economic interests. The turn to the Soviet Union in the 1950s, for instance, was motivated by the nationalist, revolutionary and anti-imperial policies of Nasser: "a Soviet orientation was dictated by the *totality* of Nasser's policies and the very nature of Nasserism"[8]. In other words, changes - to use Waterbury's rationale - in axes 2, 3 and 4 dictated a change in axis 1 (i.e. closer relations with the Soviets).

Similarly, Sadat's dramatic turn to the U.S. in the 1970s – "one of the great reversals of alignment in recent memory" in the words of William Quandt[9] - was triggered by axis 2, specifically the need to liberate the occupied territories, for only the Americans - with their special and extensive relations with Israel - could mediate a political settlement. Hence, the primary objective behind Sadat's reorientation according to Shamir was the challenge of ending Israel's presence in the Sinai. This factor "provided the context of the shift, determined its timing and pace, and constituted its main substance and purpose."[10] Another primary factor was Egypt's growing economic deficit and its desperate need for economic assistance and investment, another area where the Soviets could not compete with the West.

Walid Kazziha has a different explanation. In *Palestine in the Arab Dilemma*, he maintains that the change of Sadat's internal alliances required improving relations with Washington and ending tension with Israel. Sadat substituted the alliances Nasser had developed with a new reliance on Egyptian capitalists. According to Kazziha, the new foreign policy disposition:

"ought to be considered in relation to the evolution of a new ruling class under Sadat with its special vested interests, privileges and ambitions. The policies of Sadat were closely linked to such a change in the political and social fabric of Egyptian society"[11].

The rise of the Egyptian bourgeoisie, Kazziha argues, and the formidable links they have established with the ruling regime has made a change of policies necessary, even inevitable. As a result, Sadat's objectives "were geared to satisfying the newly emerging bourgeoisie. The situation, therefore, required closer relations with the West, cordiality with the conservative Arabs and an understanding with Israel. The less tension the area experienced, the more benefits were enjoyed by the compradors of Egypt"[12]. To Kazziha, changes in axes 1, 2, 3 and 4 resulted from a change in the structure of society and power.

In the same vein, Sadat's break-up with the Soviets secured him against his local rivals, particularly Ali Sabri, who had been widely believed to be Soviet protégé. That he got rid of them in May 1971 proves his belief that the Soviets might use them to undermine his power. In his memoirs, he called it the "Soviet power bloc".[13]

Why Sadat restructured Egypt's domestic and foreign policies towards a strategic alliance with the US, peace with Israel and economic and political liberalization at home is certainly beyond the scope of this research, but what one should note here - regardless of the validity of Waterbury, Shamir and Kazziha's interpretations - is the fact that Egyptian-American relations were from their inception and up till now closely linked to a set of polices that formed a whole package: making (and maintaining) peace with Israel and promoting the notion of peaceful coexistence with Israel among its Arab brothers, moving from a centrally planned economy to the espousal of a liberal and open economy as well as a general commitment to the concepts of pluralism and democracy. The Egyptian government may have not always introduced such changes wholeheartedly, and that indeed caused regular tension in its relationship with Washington, but the point remains that any disagreement between Cairo and Washington from the late 1970s and onwards was not on strategies anymore, but on tactics. The direction, in other words, was set and both parties happened to just differ sometimes on the pace or details. For example, no Egyptian official would dispute the rationale of economic reform and structural adjustment, but he could argue for the necessity of taking Egypt's 'special' conditions into consideration and hence demand a more flexible approach to implementing the prescriptions of the IMF. Likewise, repudiating Egypt's peace treaty with Israel became unthinkable, but the

nature of the relationship need not be satisfactory to policy-makers in Washington. In fact, the American administration and members of Congress have regularly expressed their irritation at Egypt's 'cold' attitude towards Israel. Frequent concerns about the pace of democratization or human rights breaches were also voiced by the American administration, Congress and press. An awareness of this package, I presume, is central to understanding Egyptian-American relations.

To sum up, Egypt's relationship with the United States over the past thirty years was to comprise much more than what their bilateral relationship has entailed. It included domestic Egyptian matters (political and economic), regional Egyptian policies and, most importantly, the nature of Egypt's behavior towards Israel and the Arab-Israeli conflict/peace process.

If the dividends expected by Cairo in the mid-1970s mainly included regaining the Sinai and receiving economic aid that would help in the much-needed economic development process, Americans too had much to benefit from restoring the relationship with Egypt. First, Egypt - the fulcrum of the Middle East and the barometer of the region's temperament - was an important strategic asset to win during the Cold War period. Politicians in Washington and Moscow predominantly viewed the world through the 'Cold War' lenses. In fact, the rivalry between the two superpowers was, more than anything else, "a competition for allies."[14] Ousting Soviets from Egypt was seen in Washington as a crucial step towards cutting the Soviet influence from the whole Middle East, a view that was not without merit. Indeed, the Middle East has witnessed two fundamental shifts since World War II, both of which were triggered by Egypt: the turn to the Soviet camp in the 1950s and the turn to the West in the 1970s. A pivotal state in the Middle East, Egypt could severely harm U.S. interests in the region.[15] So, as a former U.S. Ambassador put it, "the importance of Egypt to the United States is a function of the importance of the Middle East as a whole to U.S. interests."[16] From an American perspective, therefore, relations with Egypt in the Middle East were a "big success story"[17], in fact "a rare success story…in a region where such successes have been few and far between."[18]

The desire of Americans to win Egypt over was actually cultivated by Sadat's outspoken desire to act as a bulwark against Soviet infiltration of the area, and his unreserved readiness to protect U.S. interests in the region, especially after the fall of America's closest Middle East ally, the Shah of Iran[19]. William Quandt wrote that Sadat repeatedly tried to convince his American interlocutors that Egypt could act as a major strategic partner to the US:

"On occasions, the discussions at the highest level had taken on a somewhat unrealistic overtone, to the point where visions were being entertained of Egyptian troops armed with American weapons carrying out operations throughout Africa on behalf of American interests."[20]

Second, the possibility of another Arab-Israeli military round became near impossible after Egypt joined the American camp and signed a formal peace treaty with Israel (insofar as this means war launched by the Arab side). Indeed, Kissinger's prophecy that "there is no war without Egypt and no peace without Syria"[21] proved, after the passage of more than thirty years, very accurate. Another war in the oil-rich Middle East, Americans calculated, would be damaging to American economic interests for it would jeopardize the free flow of oil from the Persian Gulf to international markets. After all, the panic generated in 1973 by the Arab oil embargo and the boom in oil prices were not distant memories. "The burden of aid", therefore, "seemed to be a small price to pay to prevent a recurrence of war on the scale of October 1973."[22] Moreover, by not participating in military confrontations, promoting peace between Israel and its neighboring Arab states and in general encouraging the forces of moderation in the region, Egypt would be enhancing the prospects of stability in a heavily turbulent-ridden zone. According to a former U.S. ambassador to Egypt, the interests supported by American-Egyptian relations include "peace between Israel and the Arab neighbors, contributions to the general stability of the area, and protection of the resources of the Persian Gulf."[23]

The golden age of Egyptian-American affairs resulted in the diminishing of Soviet weight and prestige in the region as well as the conclusion of a number of Arab-Israeli agreements: Sinai I (1974), Sinai II (1975), Camp David (1978) and the Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty (1979). Egyptian-American friendship was in the second half of the 1970s nurtured by the special personal relationship developed between President Sadat and American high-officials (e.g. Kissinger, Carter, Vance…etc.). In a span of two years, Carter met Sadat four times, two of which were in Egypt. Vance met him for an additional six times, all in Egypt[24]. According to Hermann Eiltes, a former ambassador to Egypt and a witness to the development of Egyptian-American relations, it "was an extraordinary personal relationship."[25] But Egyptian-American ties were certainly premised on much more than the merely dynamics of personal interaction between top officials. Their endurance is a proof of that.

The honeymoon of bilateral relations extended from 1974 and ended sometime around 1980, with the success of Ronald Reagan in the presidential elections and the fall of Jimmy

Carter, Sadat's friend and peace partner.[26] Nevertheless, relations remained solid throughout the 1980s and 1990s, a confirmation that they are based on interests and pragmatic considerations more than on the personal affection of the leaders of the two countries.

Though the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War may have relatively diminished Egypt's importance to the United States, a number of unanticipated incidents have reminded Washington once again of Egypt's irreplaceable services to its interests in the Middle East. For example, the desperate efforts of the American administration to face the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990 would not have been that successful without Egypt's active political and military participation. Also, Egypt's mediation in the peace process launched in the aftermath of liberating Kuwait could not be substituted by any other regional party despite recurrent US efforts to promote the Jordanian role. On the other hand, the emergence of the US as the sole superpower on the international stage limited Cairo's political and economic options and minimized the room for maneuvering, thus increasing its dependence on the US.

Despite frequent disagreements on more than a few policies during the 1980s and 1990s, an overall unenthusiastic public opinion on the two sides and a long list of pressing crises, both governments showed their determination to maintain a strong relationship and neither had ever any intention of abrogating their alliance. In fact, their relationship is very much broader and deeper now than it was in the late 1970s.

Still, both states do not see eye to eye on many issues. For example, Cairo is usually critical of Washington's uneven approach to Arab-Israeli affairs and its uniform bias to Israel. On the other hand, the American administration frequently criticizes Cairo for what it perceives as a not very cooperative approach on the part of the Egyptian government, if not jeopardizing US interests. Violating the US-engineered sanctions on Iraq, keeping cordial relations with what Washington considers as rogue terrorist-sponsoring regimes (like Syria and Libya) as well as dragging its foot with regards to economic and political reform are, to name a few, issues of contention between the two countries.[27]

Furthermore, the voting of Egypt and the United States in the United Nations is customarily dissimilar. According to a State Department Report, Egypt's votes in the General Assembly coincided with the U.S. only 23.4% of the total number of votes, in contrast to the voting of Israel whose congruence with the U.S. amounts up to 93.3%[28]. Even though voting

patterns reflect just one facet of a country's foreign policy, and certainly a not very important one, they display how in principle both countries differ on a wide range of political issues.

Additionally, incidents of minor weight regularly get escalated and spark a crisis in bilateral relations. The crash of EgyptAir flight 990 in the Atlantic and the arrest of Saad Eddin Ibrahim, an American-Egyptian sociologist, in the summer of 2000 on allegations of forging public documents are two cases in point. In both instances, the media and public opinion played the principal role in magnifying the issue and turning it into a public crisis.

The public opinion in Egypt and America is, at best, not very passionate of the relationship and, at worst, critical. A poll conducted in 2003 showed that only six percent of Egyptians had a favorable view of the United States.[29] Likewise, American public support for a special relationship with Egypt has been eroding over the past few years. Two polls conducted by the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations and the Program on International Policy Attitudes at the University of Maryland in 1994 and 1995 respectively found that a majority of Americans would prefer reducing or cutting aid to Egypt.[30] Peoples are mostly inspired by a national dream and the course of American-Egyptian relations through more than three decades – despite all the strategies, policies and programs – lacked such a common dream.[31] Lamenting how the public perceives Egyptian-American relations, Abdel Monem Said, head of Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, wrote: "It looks {in the eyes of the public} like a bad marriage that's about to collapse, although it's endured for more than 27 years, or like a couple who met in a train and will depart sometime soon."[32] But the couple never departed, for the relationship is, in essence, "an elite leadership tie, as yet only shallowly rooted in Egyptian society as a whole."[33] In other words, it is not rooted in the national interest, but rather in the interests of the regime.

2. Dimensions of US-Egyptian relations:

A- Conceptualizing US-Egyptian Political Relations:

Various descriptions were used by politicians, scholars and the media to depict Egyptian-American relations as ranging from "special ties", "friendship", "partnership", "alliance", to even a "patron-client" relationship. For example, Nicholas Veliotes, a former U.S. ambassador to Egypt, called it an alliance[34] whereas William Quandt contended that the United States and Egypt "have not become…full-fledged allies" since they "disagree on many issues, which has put some strain on their relationship."[35] Abdallah comes closer to Quandt's interpretation. She

thinks that their relations after the 1991 Gulf War could be best described as a "quasi-alliance" but adds that after 1995 the level of cooperation reached its zenith.[36] To Ibrahim, however, Egypt is purely "a client state" rotating in the metropolis orbit and depending on it.[37] Shamir rejects the expression "clientage" and prefers instead the term "orientation" because it "does imply a certain level of "dependence" on the supporting power but…it does not guarantee that power, beyond what it may derive from its mere involvement in the assisted state, much more than the latter's receptivity to cooperation—which may sometimes be quite extensive, but is always substantially qualified."[38] Dessouki, on the other hand, claims that Egypt belongs to the category of client-prevalent and client-centric, a term articulated by Christopher Shoemaker and John Spanier in their book *Patron-Client State Relationships: Multilateral Crises in the Nuclear Age*. The term does not negate dependency but assumes that "the client has a substantial degree of independence and maneuverability in the conduct of foreign policy."[39] Weinbaum agrees. He believes that the relationship "does not fit well into the classic dependency model."[40] Rather, it is a "form of dependence that carries some advantages to the recipient."[41] A somehow exceptional stance (and shocking too, given the sensitivity of the issue in the Egyptian society) was taken by Reda Hillal, a renowned journalist at the daily *Al-Ahram*, who described it as "a Roman Catholic marriage that cannot end in divorce."[42] On the other end of the spectrum lies the leftist economist and thinker Galal Amin who also provides an atypical view. He believes that Egypt is an occupied country — an American colony. Apart from the presence of foreign troops on national soil, Egyptian governments since 1974, he contends, behave and think just like the governments working under British occupation did one hundred years ago.[43]

Though the honeymoon, as previously noted, has not endured the demise of Sadat and Carter from the stage, the relationship itself has shown remarkable durability over the years, in a region characterized by a high pace of change and fluidity. Egyptian-American friendship has remained a constant feature of America's foreign policy in the Middle East and Egypt's external orientation despite an ever-changing Middle East and in spite of frequent differences over several policy matters. This relation is exemplified in the cooperation of the two states over three pivotal issues.

i)- The Peace Process

The Arab-Israeli peace process has been one of the prime areas of Egyptian-American cooperation. In the late 1970s, Egypt sought to revive the West Bank and Gaza autonomy talks mandated by the Camp David Accords, but her efforts failed on the rock of Israeli intransigence and American indifference (and preoccupation too with the Iranian revolution and its dangerous repercussions). After Sadat's departure, Mubarak vigorously pursued the Palestinian question as a way of ending Egypt's isolation in the Arab world. As Cantori put it, "a new closeness with the Palestinians was useful, since they represented the most potent legitimizing factor available to Egypt for overcoming alienantion from the Arab state system."[44] Therefore, bringing the Arabs to the negotiating table was at the heart of Egypt's regional policy in the 1980s. In fact, Egypt did not have much difficulty doing that because war, since Camp David and the neutralization of Egypt's military capabilities, has not been seen by the Arabs as a realistic option anymore. Cairo believed that Egypt's vital role in reviving the peace process would enhance its position in regional and international affairs, leading to political and economic benefits. It also understood that solving the problematic Palestinian issue would reduce one of the major causes of instability in the region, hence trim down the internal pressures associated with the continuance of the conflict. Indeed, finding a solution for the Palestinian problem in the aftermath of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon helped Mubarak mute his domestic critics, so that foreign policy issues figured less importantly in the parliamentary elections of 1984 than it normally might have. In fact, Mubarak was able to "set the terms of the (domestic) debate so that the peace treaty itself is not in question, but only the tactics of the peace process are open to debate."[45] As a result, Mubarak's authority was strengthened and his legitimacy bolstered.

On the regional level, the initiation of a peace process between Arab states and Israel, Mubarak rightly thought, guaranteed that the issue of Egyptian-Israeli relations would cease to emerge as a controversial issue in inter-Arab politics. Equally important is the fact that the promotion of the peace process would also reinforce Egypt's general efforts to encourage the forces of moderation in the region, weaken revolutionary regimes (such as Libya and Syria in the 1980s) and mute these regimes' revisionist tendencies.

For a number of reasons, the Americans were also concerned about the future of the peace process. The security of Israel is a constant in the US policy in the Middle East. Stability in the region, hence the free flow of oil, is contingent upon ending the state of tension and the drift towards peaceful coexistence.

The signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993 and the direct involvement of Palestinian negotiators in peace talks with their Israeli counterparts did not weaken the Egyptian role. In fact, Egypt's involvement was a vital ingredient in all ensuing Palestinian-Israeli peace talks[46]. Egypt remained the principal mediator between Israelis and Palestinians and numerous summits were held in Sharm el-Sheikh to rescue the ever-faltering peace process.

ii) - The Gulf War:

Another issue where close Egyptian-American cooperation proved very useful to both parties was the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990 and the grave threat it posed to the interests of Washington and Cairo. To Washington, Saddam's control of Kuwait's oil and his threat of dominating the rest of the oil-rich sheikhdoms were totally unacceptable. Also, the use of crude force in a volatile region threatened America's interests in the whole Middle East for the example Saddam set could be emulated by other revisionist forces. Similarly, the United States needed to demonstrate its resolve and prove its global dominance as the Cold War was coming to an end and a new world order was unfolding.

Cairo was also deeply alarmed by Saddam's ground-breaking move. If Iraq was allowed to swallow Kuwait, Mubarak calculated, Egypt's regional preeminence would be something of the past. Cairo's efforts to promote stability in the Arab world were also severely harmed by Iraq's radical acts. In no way was Egypt ready to accept a return to the revolutionary policies of the 1950s and 1960s.

No doubt, the input of Egypt to the political and military campaign launched by the US was indispensable. From day one, Egypt launched a fierce diplomatic campaign condemning the Iraqi invasion and calling for the withdrawal of Iraqi troops and the reinstatement of Kuwait's Emir. Upon Mubarak's call, an emergency Arab summit was convened in Cairo, in which a resolution allowing Arab countries to deploy troops in Saudi Arabia was adopted. Egypt's opposition to Iraq and its siding with the US provided a much-needed legitimacy cover for the efforts of the United States to deploy military troops close to the holy shrines in Saudi Arabia. Militarily, some 40,000 Egyptian troops joined the coalition, second only to the contribution of the US.

iii) War on Terrorism

In the face of the ascent of the Islamic threat at home and the apparent cross-national links among underground Islamic movements in different countries, fighting terrorism has become one of the main pillars of Egyptian foreign policy. President Mubarak has, as early as 1986, called for an international conference to combat terrorism and has not missed any opportunity since then to reiterate his call. Egyptian diplomacy actively worked in regional and international organizations to advance mechanisms of countering terrorism and to enhance cooperation among states in this regard. For example, Egypt recommended discussing the issue of terrorism in the UN's General Assembly yearly instead of every two years and called the UN Secretary-General to submit an annual report on terrorism and possible ways of defying it[47]. Egypt also attempted to convince European countries to extradite some wanted Islamists who - under the pretext of human rights - had been granted political asylum[48].

Egyptian-American cooperation on terrorism has certainly predated the events of September, 11th. In the 1990s, an FBI office was opened in Cairo, in spite of the opposition's vociferous reservations[49]. Mutual security collaboration on fighting terrorism and law enforcement issues, however, was dramatically increased after September 2001. Robert Mueller, the head of the FBI, visited Egypt in January 2002 and declared that Egyptian authorities provided support in every field needed, in particular exchanging information. Mubarak had indeed told the French daily *Le Figaro* a few days after the attacks in September that exchanging information with the Americans takes place on a daily basis. Also, a US-Egypt Counter Terrorism Joint Working Group was established and held its first meeting in July 2003[50]. Moreover, the agreement on legal and judicial cooperation signed back in 1998 was ratified in November 2001. The agreement allows targeting the funding networks of terrorist organizations.[51]

A report issued by the US Government Accountability Office in May 2006 gave a detailed account of Egypt's contribution to America's war on terrorism over the previous three years: it permitted around 40,000 military flights in its airspace; it conceded expedited passage to 861 military ships through the Suez Canal; it treated more than 100,000 patients at an Egyptian military hospital in Afghanistan; and it trained 25 Iraqi diplomats and 250 policemen. Furthermore, Egypt is one of the frequent destinations for captives in cases of "extraordinary rendition", where the US authorities seizes suspects then dispatches them to other countries for interrogation.[52]

Hence, Egypt has been an active partner in America's global war on terrorism. Though it refrained from direct participation in the military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, Cairo's generous political support and its close coordination in intelligence and security matters were valuable to the American campaign. On the other hand, Egypt had benefited from the unprecedented attention the question of resisting terrorism has gained by the American endeavor. Now, the long-standing enemies of the regime turned into the enemies of the United States and the whole world. This allowed Cairo a free hand in dealing with the internal Islamic opposition. Immediately following 9/11, dozens of Islamists were sent to court martial with a much muted international criticism. Also, many countries have, for the first time, agreed to send back some of the terrorists on Egypt's wanted list.

B-Military Relations

Military relations between Egypt and the United States started with Sadat's turn to the West in 1974 but were only strengthened after the conclusion of Egyptian-Israeli peace in the late 1970s. Military cooperation has since then developed into a multi-faceted program. It includes substantial armaments supplies, transfer of technology, coproduction of weaponry, Egyptian guarantees of secure naval passage through the Suez Canal, provision of military facilities, the conduct of joint military exercises and even limited access to Egyptian airfields.

Most of these activities are part of the huge military assistance program provided each year to Egypt. The American reasons for providing military aid to Egypt, as stated by the Department of Defense, are "to defend Egypt against external threats; to ensure American strategic access to the Suez Canal and other Egyptian facilities; and to help maintain the interoperability of American and Egyptian forces."[53]

To the United States, the strategic importance of the Persian Gulf as a source of huge oil reserves in a conflict-rich region increased Egypt's military usefulness. Allowing air and naval transit through Egyptian territories for US ships and aircrafts is crucial for American military operations conducted in the Gulf. In the 1990 Kuwait crisis, for example, Mubarak authorized the passage of a nuclear carrier task force via the Suez Canal[54]. Also, in the period between December 1997 and March 1998, access to the canal and military facilities was provided for American forces striking Iraq, despite the official political condemnation of it[55]. The same level of support took place during the invasion of Iraq in 2003, a contribution deemed very functional

after Turkey turned down an American request to open a Northern front against Iraq from its territories.[56] Moreover, Egypt was a major participant in several peacekeeping operations of prime concern to American interests (e.g. Somalia and Bosnia).[57]

Military cooperation, however, fell short of providing permanent bases to the American army. The Ras Banas facility on the Red Sea was one of the contentious issues in Egyptian-American relations during the early years of Mubarak's presidency[58]. After a period of negotiations, Mubarak categorically rejected the idea:

"We do not give bases to anyone. That subject is closed. The United States understands our position. We reject the idea of any foreign bases on our soil."[59]

Militarily occupied for decades, Egyptians became too sensitive to any sort of permanent foreign presence on national soil. Military cooperation that encroaches upon one's sovereignty can, as a matter of fact, be accepted by governments, so long as it can be hidden from the public. But military bases are too visible and too reminiscent of the British occupation. Succumbing to American pressure, thus, would have cost Mubarak a lot domestically.

The incident revealed the limits strategic coordination between both countries can reach. In his first years in office, Mubarak aimed at lessening to some extent Sadat's disproportionate dependence on the US and pursuing more balanced relations with the two superpowers**.** Furthermore, with an eye on domestic legitimacy, Mubarak rejected the offer realizing that it would bolster his position at home but would not jeopardize his relations with the US.

The level of military cooperation was raised in 1988 with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The accord allows Egypt to sell weaponry to the United States; to participate in military research conducted by the United States; and to purchase increased quantities of armaments from the United States. It also permits Egypt to produce a great number of parts for the sophisticated M-1 tank[60]. Military coordination was deepened further in the early 1990s. In the 'Desert Storm' campaign to liberate Kuwait, Egypt's armed forces participated with around 40,000 troops, second only to the contribution of the United States. As a reward for its vital efforts, $6.7 billion of Egypt's military debt was cancelled.

Egypt's armed forces are significantly dependent upon American weaponry and training. In the period from the mid 1980s to the beginning of the twenty-first century, the US granted about $20 billion for modernizing Egyptian forces. Additionally, more than $25 billion were spent on the training Egyptian officers receive in America. Some sources, in fact, estimate that

half of Egyptian defense spending is provided by the US.[61] As such, the United States has become "the lifeblood of Egypt's military."[62] The dilemma of Egypt's military, after the end of the Cold War, is the lack of a feasible alternative to the US. Neither Russia nor China would be willing to provide such generous amounts of military aid, nor can either substitute for Egypt's deep-rooted linkage to Western arms with its own production.

The military's dependence on US aid is closely linked to the regime's survival. Aid keeps the army loyal and de-politicized. As the chaotic events of 1977 and 1986 showed, the army in Egypt is the ultimate backer of regime security. By keeping officer corps pleased, the continuation of aid contributes to the regime's security. That's precisely why Cairo has adamantly rejected any decrease in the volume of military aid.

But that same dependence is not good for Egyptian military strategy. That the US is the major supplier of weapons and military technology to the Middle East perpetuates Israel's qualitative superiority vis-à-vis all Arab states. Egypt's military has faced no formidable threats from the Libyan or Sudanese borders, except, perhaps, for the brief period when Egypt-Sudan relations tensed up upon the rise of Islamists' influence in Khartoum. It is Israel's military prowess and nuclear capability that raises concerns among the top brass and causes it to arm to the teeth. However, Israel's qualitative edge is still unmatched and its nuclear arsenal remains intact, facts that continue to worry the Egyptian defense establishment.

C- Economic Relations

A- Aid

Foreign aid has always been a major component of economic financing to successive Egyptian regimes since the outbreak of the 1952 revolution. In the period between 1952 and 1975, for example, 37% of total investments in development and 36% of total imports were paid for by foreign aid[63]. After 1975, the same pattern of dependency prevailed, but a different patron was relied upon.

American assistance to Egypt started flowing following the two countries' rapprochement in the mid-1970s. An extensive aid program, however, was formulated on the eve of Egyptian-Israeli peace whereby Egypt receives about $2.1 billion annually; $1.3 billion in military aid and $815 million in economic assistance. Accordingly, Egypt became the second largest recipient of American military and economic aid, only next to Israel and ahead of many long-standing

American allies, like Turkey, the Philippines and Pakistan.[64] The rationale of the huge aid package provided to Egypt and Israel after Camp David, as announced by the State Department, was to:

"secure "a just and lasting comprehensive peace" between Israel and its neighbors, especially Egypt; reaffirm the US commitment to a democratic Israel; promote regional stability by helping Egypt modernize its armed forces; and encourage sustainable development and a market-oriented economy in Egypt."[65]

The heavy financial assistance program had a highly political character. The logic of aid's initiation was to reward Egypt for making peace with Israel and its continuation was contingent upon maintaining that peace. On the whole, aid was meant to dissuade Egypt from embracing foreign policies that would harm American interests and in the meantime encourage other Arab states to follow Egypt's path. Moreover, American aid was used to enhance the capability of the Egyptian regime to survive in the face of a series of destabilizing economic crises and a ferocious underground Islamic opposition[66]. In other words, the enormous political dividends reaped by Washington explain the kind economic treatment: "no other third world country has been treated more generously by the U.S. Congress."[67]

By the start of the twenty-first century, total US aid to Egypt exceeded $50 billion. In fact, more than half of total foreign economic assistance committed annually to Egypt was provided by the American aid program, a fact that highlights Egypt's extensive financial dependence on the United States. In the period from 1981 to 1991, the percentage of American aid to total aid received by Egypt stood at an average of about sixty percent (see table 3).

The US economic support program is composed of several components: projects, commodity import program, cash transfer in addition to the food program (usually referred to as Public Law 480).[68] The projects' scheme helped establish a number of projects that cover a wide range of socio-economic activities, such as power generating plants, cement plants, sewage plants, granaries and agricultural improvement programs.

Egypt's food sector is also extremely dependent on the assistance of the United States. In 1983, Egypt ranked the world's third importer of US wheat and wheat flour. The P.L. 480 program supplies a sizeable share of the wheat consumed by the Egyptian market. It was reported that one-third of the bread sold in Cairo comes from that program. Actually, for many

years Egypt has been the world's largest beneficiary of the scheme, and is second only to India since the start of the program in 1955.[69]

More than any other economic aspect of the relationship, the leverage of aid was at times used by Washington to induce a cooperative Egyptian behavior. In the late 1980s, for instance, the Bush administration decided to deny Egypt a $230 million cash grant to push it to carry out the package of economic reforms required by the IMF to reschedule its huge foreign debt[70]. A similar scenario recurred ten years later. Displeased about the imprisonment of Egyptian-American sociologist Saad Eddin Ibrahim, George W. Bush, according to the *New York Times*, warned Mubarak in a letter of stopping new aid to Egypt[71]. In the last few years, voices emanating from the US Congress and media have periodically demanded conditioning aid on progress in Egypt's human rights record.

A ten-year plan to reduce economic aid by fifty percent was started in FY 1997. By 2008, economic aid to Egypt will stand at around $400 million. The larger - and more crucial - military aid, however, will remain untouched.

B-Trade and Investment

The United States is one of Egypt's major trading partners. In the period from 1981 to 1991, Egypt's imports from the United States constituted 15.3% of Egypt's total imports. In the same period, Egypt's exports to the United States comprised 5.4% of Egypt's total exports (see tables 4, 5 and 6)[72]. From an Egyptian perspective, thus, the US is more important as a supplier of goods (particularly agricultural products) than as an outlet for Egyptian products[73]. The volume of trade increased in the 1990s, from 4.1 billion Egyptian Pounds in 1990 to 7.4 billion in 1997 and 10.4 billion in 1999, 12.5%, 12.7% and 18.5% of Egypt's foreign trade respectively. The share of the American market increased from 8.6% in 1990 to 11.6% in the year 1997 but imports decreased a bit from around 14% in 1990 to 13% in 1997[74].

A degree of concentration in bilateral trade cannot be overlooked. Top Egyptian imports, for example, are agricultural products, in particular wheat, wheat flour and corn. The three commodities represented approximately 25% of Egypt's overall imports from the US in the years from 1981 to 1991. Moreover, the United States provided Egypt with about 55% of its total needs of the three strategic products during the same episode[75]. On the other hand, Egyptian exports to the US are dependent on oil products and textiles representing 38% and 43% of

Egypt's total exports to the American market[76]. Iron and steel come next with a total of $253 million in 2004[77].

American investments in Egypt increased noticeably since the restoration of bilateral relations in 1974. By 1998, they made up a sizeable portion of total foreign investment in Egypt: 17.5% of the number of projects, 18.3% of capital and 22.8% of total value[78]. Two-thirds of American investment is in the sector of oil and gas. In the years from 1981 to 1991, US investment in that sector represented around 30% of total investment (national and foreign) and 43% of foreign direct investment (see tables 8 and 9). The banking sector has also attracted US firms. In 1974, only six banks existed in the country. By the year 1983, 75 foreign and Egyptian banks were operating, many of which were American[79]. Nonetheless, the total volume of American investments is less than expected for it is meager in relation to the total volume of external US investments; Egypt receives less than 1 percent of total American investments worldwide.[80]

In May 1998, US Vice President Al Gore announced the establishment of the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA), which broadened the scope of economic cooperation the US-Egypt Partnership for Economic Growth and Development signed in April 1995 had initiated. TIFA supposedly paves the way for a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between the two countries.

Summary

1- *New Foreign Policy Circle.* Nasser's classical categorization of Egypt's web of foreign relations into three major circles (Arab, African and Islamic) is no longer valid. In the 1970s, President Sadat had added the American circle and that circle survived and prevailed over other circles.

2- *Dependency*. Regardless of the debate of how to best depict Egypt's special relationship with Washington, the fact remains that Egypt is dependent some way or another on the United States. In its foreign relations, furthermore, Egypt is dependent on the US more than it is on any other state. Economic dependency intensified because of Egypt's rising economic difficulties in the 1980s and 1990s and political dependency grew after the end of the Cold War and the absence of any viable political alternative to the United States. As a result, that circle is seen today by Egypt's political elite as the most important circle in the totality of Egypt's foreign relations.

According to an expert at Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, the Western circle (America and Europe) is the most influential foreign policy circle, not the Arab one[81]. The West, explains another expert at the esteemed think tank, is the source of aid, investment, weapons, knowledge and technology. Economic interaction is the heaviest with the US and Europe, and a substantial percentage of the Egyptian elite got their education and training in the West. Moreover, Egypt's interaction with the UN and its various agencies, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the European Union surpasses those it has with the Arab League, the African Union and the Organization of Islamic Conference.[82] In the eyes of Egyptian policy-makers, the West comes first then the rest.

3- *Same Pattern, Different Patron.* After more than five decades of depending upon foreign aid, dependency developed into some kind of addiction. An Israeli official has said that US aid "is narcotic and we are hooked."[83] The Egyptian case is no different. In fact, "a mentality of dependence", argues Fouad Ajami, has set in as a result of decades of uninterrupted foreign assistance.[84] The lack of a substitute to the United States, however, makes dependence on the outside at the moment exclusively American. In other words, addiction to outside assistance turned into addiction to the United States only.

4- *Strategic and Political Dependency*. The importance of the economic dimension (particularly aid) notwithstanding, the strategic, political and military aspects of the bilateral relationship are, by far, more important than the economic one.

5- *Personality Factor*. The prime importance attached to regime survival by President Mubarak, his ultra-cautious nature (explained in detail in chapter three) and the unfavorable regional and international developments made him too sensitive to American demands and less capable of resisting Washington's mounting pressure.

No true understanding of the decisions taken by the Egyptian leadership vis-à-vis Israel in late 2004 and early 2005 could be reached without taking into consideration two main factors: a historical account of the nature of Egyptian-Israeli relations since their inception in 1979 and an examination of the changes in American foreign policy towards the Middle East in the aftermath of September 2001. In a way, the two categories combined summarize the substance of my arguments in this chapter; the first category raises question marks (i.e. the research question or dilemma of this case study) and the second category aids in answering them.

II Egyptian-Israeli Relation (1979-2004):

The Institutionalization of Cold War

Normalization "has sunk into oblivion; there is no normalization now. So many years after signing the peace treaty, there are no normal trade relations with Israel; there is no cultural cooperation; there is no Egyptian tourism to Israel. It is as if Israel and Egypt were not living in peace but were two absolute alien and estranged countries."

Yitzhak Shamir, Israeli Prime Minister

Since the Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty was signed in 1979, Egyptian-Israeli relations were characterized with tension, ill feelings and mistrust. It is true that war is no longer an option but a clash of interests, coupled with a long history of animosity and misperceptions, still prevails. Short of military confrontations, conflicts of interests under peace have frequently escalated into verbal exchanges, political encounters, espionage and propaganda wars.

After the Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty was signed in 1979, President Sadat realized that the generous dividends of peace promised by the United States would not be forthcoming unless normalization with Israel is accelerated. Hence, oil was sold to Israel, tourism allowed and dozens of bilateral agreements and protocols (in the fields of agriculture, trade, tourism, transportation, medicine, culture, scientific cooperation…etc) were signed. Yet, a series of provocative Israeli actions put a brake on the implementation of those agreements. The formal annexation of East Jerusalem in May 1980 and the Golan Heights in December 1981 are two cases in point. The bombing of the Iraqi nuclear reactor in June 1981, just three days after Sadat's meeting in Sinai with the Israeli premiere Menachem Begin, embarrassed Sadat and sowed the first seeds of freezing the process of normalization.

The final straw came with Israel's invasion of Lebanon in June 1982 and its complicity in the horrific Sabra and Shatila massacres in September of the same year. The Egyptian public felt humiliated; Egyptians recognized that now that Egypt has been militarily neutralized by the peace agreements, Israel had a free hand in imposing its terms on other Arabs by military force. Hosni Mubarak who was intent anyway on mitigating the excesses of his predecessor's policies was placed under immense domestic pressure to come to the help of fellow Lebanese and Palestinians. In other words, even though the public outcry forced Mubarak to act, it also provided him with an opportunity to distance himself from the kind of association with Israelis

his predecessor had enjoyed and show at the same time his sincere commitment to Arab causes, something he badly needed to successfully reintegrate Egypt into the Arab world. Mubarak therefore decided to withdraw the Egyptian ambassador from Tel Aviv and an immediate freeze on all aspects of normalization was ordered[85]. Since then, the term 'cold peace' started to be widely used to describe Egypt's relations with Israel. 'Cold War', however, is a more accurate and realistic depiction.

The dispute over Taba[86], the expansion of Jewish settlements in occupied territories, the bombing of the PLO headquarters in Tunis in 1985, the harsh Israeli handling of the Palestinian Intifada that erupted in the West Bank and Gaza in December 1987, the massive Jewish immigration from the Soviet Union to Israel in the late 1980s as well as Israel's overall intransigence to the peace propositions offered by the United States and moderate Arab parties (Egypt and Jordan) guaranteed a perpetuation of Egypt's stance towards the Jewish state, that is respecting the peace treaty but freezing of bilateral relations[87]. Normalization, in other words, came to be seen in Cairo as "the cost, not the benefit, of peace."[88]

In no way was Egypt ready to abrogate the peace treaty and return to a state of belligerency with Israel. Mubarak's main focus was on his country's severe economic troubles. Another war with Israel would have drained Egypt's resources, jeopardized the peace dividends and threatened the country's social and political stability. Asked in 1983 about the potential annulment of the Camp David Accords, Mubarak made it clear that Camp David is irreversible:

"What is the meaning of the annulment of the Camp David Agreement?...Shall I return Sinai to Israel?...It means the declaration of a state of war with Israel. If I want to declare a state of war, it is imperative for me to be militarily prepared. In other words, I should halt development and focus on the evolution of (military) services. I should concentrate all my efforts on war. Who will foot the bill for war? The Arabs? I do not know. Suppose that we obtained the necessary funding from them – no less than L50-60 billion for armaments to enable the Army to stand its ground. Who will give me arms to fight Israel? The US will not give me arms to fight Israel. Furthermore, Europe also will not give me arms. {As for the Soviets, they}…will impose terms on us."[89]

Mubarak's firm reluctance to suspend adherence to the treaty has not witnessed any change in the more than two decades that followed. In fact, it became an integral part of Egypt's policy towards Israel. Neither did Egypt's economic conditions improve to a level required for

sustaining the high costs of a prolonged military conflict nor is Mubarak, in the first place, the type of leader who would take uncertain adventures or embark on risky ventures. Pragmatism and caution continued thus to guide his foreign policy towards Israel[90]. As Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Moussa noted in 1991, peace with Israel "is no luxury, but a need."[91] And that is specifically why the Egyptian-Israeli relations withstood so many crises over the past twenty-five years, any of which could have led Cairo, had circumstances been different, to reconsider its formal link with Israel.[92] The Peace Treaty, to use Stein's expression, "bent, but it did not break."[93] With the maintenance of a state of peace but a halt on the development of normal relations, peace with Israel, therefore, comes closer to a mere cease-fire or "a non-belligerency treaty, rather than a fully-fledged peace treaty."[94] Publicly, Mubarak considered Camp David a "legal obligation to be observed and respected." Other than that, he had little else to add; he "is neither proud nor ashamed of it. He neither brags about nor apologizes for it."[95]

Mubarak realized that short of abrogating the peace treaty or formally cutting Egypt's diplomatic relations with Israel, Egypt still had a wide space of political maneuvering. To Egypt, peace with Israel was an interim agreement on the path of a comprehensive Arab-Israeli settlement based on Israeli withdrawal from all territories occupied in the 1967 war. But Israel's initial unwillingness to negotiate with the PLO, its heavy-handed approach towards Palestinians under its control and its subsequent rigidity and stubbornness during the peace negotiations made such an objective seem remote. Egypt often tried to encourage the United States to pressure Israel to show more flexibility with regards to peace proposals, but its influence in Washington was anyway limited. Control of the pace of normalization was thus one of the few weapons left in Egypt's diplomatic arsenal. Political visits and exchanges on all levels were on the whole called off. Mubarak, in fact, never visited Israel (with the exception of a few-hour visit in 1995 to attend the funeral of Israel's assassinated leader Yitzhak Rabin, something he was intent anyway on calling a condolence call rather than an official visit).

After the invasion of Lebanon, for example, Israel was barred from participating in the Cairo Book Fair in 1983 and 1984 in addition to the 1983 Trade Fair. Moreover, no new business deals were signed and a previously planned program of mutual visits was cancelled. As an Egyptian diplomat put it, "How can we talk about sending musical bands and artists to Israel when they are massacring people?"[96] Furthermore, volumes of trade remained limited. In 1980 Israel sold Egypt $10 million worth of goods. The number slightly increased in 1981 and 1982 to

a still low figure of $13.7 and $22 respectively. It then dropped in 1983 to only $5.5 million. On the other hand, Egypt's total exports to Israel - with the exception of oil - did not exceed $700,000 in 1982[97] Progress in the field of tourism was also limited. In 1980 (the first year of unlocked borders), only 14,000 Israelis visited Egypt. The number increased to 38,000 in 1981 and 45,000 in 1982, but dropped somehow after the invasion to 63,000 in the years 1983 and 1984 combined[98]. On the other hand, the flow of tourists from Egypt to Israel was nearly non-existent. Fueled by Egypt's tremendous displeasure over Israel's hesitation to start negotiating with Palestinians, the trend of sluggish development in the areas of trade and tourism continued throughout the rest of the decade[99]. Commercial dealings reached its peak in the first half of the 1990s in tandem with the progress achieved on Israeli-Arab peace negotiations (on the Palestinian, Jordanian and Syrian tracks). In 1994, total Egyptian-Israeli trade reached $43 million, still half the trade between Israel and Uruguay, but way higher than the exceptionally low levels of pre-peace negotiations.[100]

Egypt linked normalization with progress achieved on the Arab Israeli peace process. In 1986, Egyptian Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Boutros Boutros-Ghali said that Egyptian-Israeli relations "would not reach a stage of full normalization, quantitatively and qualitatively unless a comprehensive settlement of the Middle East crisis materializes."[101] A comprehensive peace settlement and full Israeli withdrawal from occupied territories in addition to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state were put by Cairo as preconditions for full normalization. Hence, all facets of normalization - diplomatic, economic, and cultural - were controlled in order to induce Israel to move ahead on the peace process. A former Israeli ambassador to Egypt explains how the issue of mutual visits was used by Cairo to make gains from the Israeli side:

"To the credit of Egyptian diplomacy, I have to say that it has very quickly grasped the importance of this tool in dealing with Israel and has succeeded in making its usage into a real art…Mutual visits and invitations became in their experienced hands (like other ingredients of normalization) goods to be exchanged for a price. As for any other merchandise, its value increased in direct proportion to its scarcity on the market."[102]

Throughout their almost three-decade relationship, Egyptians showed a clear preference for negotiating with the Labor Party and exhibited meanwhile a lack of interest in dealing with the right-wing Likud Party and its leaders. For example, during the Egyptian boycott of Israeli

officials caused by the invasion of Lebanon, Egypt allowed in the spring of 1984 a delegation from the Labor Party and the 'Peace Now' Movement to visit Cairo. Egypt hoped the Likud hard-liners would lose control in the 1984 elections to the Labor Party. In the late 1980s, Cairo also boycotted Prime Minister Shamir for his negative stance towards the peace process. On the other hand, Mubarak developed somewhat friendly relations with Labor Party leaders Shimon Peres and Yitzhak Rabin in the first half of the 1990s, a period that witnessed the launch of Arab-Israeli peace talks in Madrid (1991), the signing of the Oslo Accords (1993) as well as the Jordanian-Israeli peace agreement (1994). During that period, the rate of official visits increased dramatically and official criticism of Israel conspicuously subsided. The election of Benjamin Netanyaho - a Likudi hawk - as prime minister in May 1996 was therefore exceptionally vexing for the Egyptian leadership. Indeed, soon did relations reach a low ebb following the opening of the Hasmonean Tunnel in East Jerusalem in September and Netanyaho's declared opposition to the 'Land for Peace' formula agreed upon by all negotiating parties since the Madrid conference. In response, Cairo hosted an Arab League summit in July, conducted unprecedented military exercises in Sinai in September and stiffened Palestinian positions in the Hebron negotiations in winter.

The eruption of the second '*Intifada*' in September 2000 and the subsequent election of Ariel Sharon in 2001 returned Egyptian-Israeli relations once again to point zero. Sharon's exceedingly ruthless treatment of the Palestinian uprising and his systematic destruction of the Palestinian infrastructure on one hand and his total rejection of Arafat and the Palestinian leadership on the other gave a knock-out blow to the political process, something that provoked Cairo immeasurably. Because of Mubarak's overriding obsession with Egypt's (and his regime's) security, nothing could anger him more than a suspension of negotiations and a return to the politics of tension. During the first *Intifada*, he said: "What is taking place in the occupied territories – the West Bank and Gaza – is contagious."[103] There is no reason to assume his reaction to the second *Intifada* was any different. As political analyst Mohamed Sid-Ahmed said:

"Cairo is aware that the longer Israel's repression of the Intifada goes on in the absence of a negotiating process, the greater the threat of destabilization to the entire region…disturbances will not remain confined to the Palestinian theatre alone."[104]

So in response to the escalation of Israeli repression of Palestinian civilians, the Egyptian ambassador was called from Israel and communication was for the most part suspended.

Moreover, Mubarak, whose public statements are usually balanced and who refrains from heated talk, waged a propaganda war against the hawkish policies of Sharon whom he considered responsible for destroying peace and spreading tension and hatred in the region. Cold Egyptian-Israeli relations turned glacial.

Even when Arab-Israeli peace seemed imminent in the mid-1990s, Egyptian-Israeli relations were poisoned for another reason, namely competition for regional leadership. Cairo was worried about the rising Israeli involvement in regional affairs after signing the Oslo Accords with Arafat and the economic ties it extended to a number of Arab countries, such as Qatar, Oman, Tunisia and Morocco. Egypt's Foreign Minister Amr Moussa coined the term '*Harwala*' (rushing) to depict Arab parties who rushed to make business deals with the Jewish state and allowed Israeli offices to be opened in their capitals before a final peace agreement on the Palestinian and Syrian tracks was realized. The Egyptian government argued that a comprehensive political settlement should precede the lifting of the Arab economic boycott. During the 1994 Middle East and North Africa (MENA) conference held in Casablanca, Shimon Peres further fueled Egypt's simmering fears when he preached his Arab counterparts about the benefits of Israel's leadership: "Egypt led the Arabs for 40 years and brought them to the abyss, you will see the region's economic situation improve when Israel takes the reins of leadership in the Middle East."[105] Peres went further by calling for expanding the membership of the Arab League to include non-Arab Middle Eastern countries, including Israel. The statements of Peres confirmed Egyptian suspicions that in the new Middle East order constructed in the post-peace era, Israel - by virtue of its technological advancement and massive US support - would strive for dominating the area economically, after subjugating it militarily for four decades.[106] In January 1995, another Israeli politician, Yitzhak Rabin, made another shocking statement: Israel might, if necessary, resort to war with Egypt. Egyptian and Arab intellectuals were seriously alarmed about the Israeli diplomatic offense and its potential effect on Egypt's influence and bargaining power in the Middle East. Mohamed Heikal, for example, expressed his belief that regional competition is a vital contradiction between Egypt and Israel, and that it will continue to shape events in the Middle East for a long time to come.[107] In the same vein, Fawaz Gerges predicted that the interests of Egypt and Israel in the new Middle East "are bound to clash".[108] To alleviate his peoples' anxiety, Mubarak contended that any "assumption that Israel is capable of

swallowing up Egypt is wrong. Egypt has always been, and will continue to be, a pivotal state in the region."[109]

Consequently, the Egyptian leadership devised a two-pronged regional strategy. First, it pressured Arab states who had inclinations to deal with Israel to postpone normalization until an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict is attained. To this effect, a tripartite summit was held in Alexandria in December 1994 with the Saudi monarch, King Fahd, and the Syrian President Hafiz Assad to coordinate a common policy towards Israel and bolster Syria's negotiating posture. And in response to Netanyaho's unyieldingness with Palestinians, Egypt - along with Saudi Arabia, Syria and other Arab states - boycotted the MENA conference in Doha in 1997. For years, "Egyptian opposition leaders have been demanding that Israel be dwarfed to its natural size; today it is official policy."[110] In truth, some of the positions endorsed by the government were even "more hard-line than those of the opposition."[111]

Second, Egypt tried to neutralize Israel's nuclear capabilities. It announced that it would not sign the renewal of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in April 1995 unless Israel joins the treaty and allows international inspectors to examine its nuclear facilities. The position was in line with President Mubarak's proposal to free the Middle East from all weapons of mass destruction, including of course Israel's some two hundred nuclear warheads. Concomitantly, the Egyptian diplomacy launched a worldwide campaign to garner support for its initiative. It became obvious that dismantling Israel's nuclear arsenal "has turned into a genuine preoccupation for Egypt and a priority goal of its foreign and security policies."[112] However, the plan ultimately failed, for Egypt - under uncompromising US pressure[113] – grudgingly re-signed its adherence to the NPT whereas Israel maintained its policy of staying aloof from any nuclear obligation. However, the whole episode polluted Egyptian-Israeli relations and highlighted one of its contentious issues.[114]

Undoubtedly, the Egyptian stubborn position on the issue of normalization was negatively perceived by Israeli politicians who had been initially looking forward to more than just normal relations to find out that even normal ties are not feasible. Over time, they realized that their relationship with their Southern neighbor will never be like the one, for example, France enjoys with Germany, or Canada has with the United States. In 1992, the Director General of the Israeli Ministry of Defense, Major-General David Ivri expressed to the *Jerusalem Post* his deep frustration at the Egyptian attitude: "The peace with Egypt is not peace, it is

actually a cease-fire that has continued for 15 years; Mubarak has not created any Egyptian interest in Israel's continued existence."[115] Prime Minister Shamir too stated his disappointment about the slowness in Egypt's normalization with Israel. Normalization, he stated:

"has sunk into oblivion; there is no normalization now. So many years after signing the peace treaty, there are no normal trade relations with Israel; there is no cultural cooperation; there is no Egyptian tourism to Israel. It is as if Israel and Egypt were not living in peace but were two absolute alien and estranged countries."[116]

Similarly, Yitzhak Rabin, just three months before his election as prime minister in 1992, said: "I am admittedly disappointed by the lack of satisfactory progress in normalizing ties between two countries at peace"[117]. Even Israel's foremost Egyptophile, President Weizman, felt compelled to say that there is "an ill wind blowing from the Nile."[118] In parallel with Israeli politicians' dissatisfaction with formal Egyptian policy, intellectuals supportive of Israel were aggravated at the anti-Israel attitude espoused by their Egyptian counterparts. At the height of the second *Intifada*, distinguished scholar Barry Rubin wrote in *The Jerusalem Post*:

"The one thing Egypt does continue to produce is anti-Israel rhetoric. Having met with intellectuals, scholars and analysts from virtually every Middle East country, I can attest that the Egyptians are…the most obsessed with scoring points by inaccurate and nasty attacks on Israel."[119]

But the Egyptian leadership was not particularly interested in Israeli objections over its policies. In 1996, Egypt's Foreign Minister Amr Moussa reacted to Israel's relentless calls for normalizing relations by saying:

"If Israel's idea about normalization is that we should honor it in every area and not annoy it, we reject this idea. We will not be anybody's puppet…We will implement our own agenda whether it makes Israel happy or miserable."[120]

On a visit to Tel Aviv, Moussa retorted to an inquiry about the 'cold peace' status between the two countries by blaming it on the Israeli side: "You are making it such by your continuous violations of Arab rights. There is no way Egyptians will warm up to you when they see Israeli soldiers beating Palestinian children on TV every night".[121]

To sum up, a variety of reasons explain the Egyptian government's cold attitude towards Israel and its reluctance to develop normal relations with it: Israel's offensive regional policies especially vis-à-vis Palestinians in occupied territories and the Arab-Israeli peace process in

general; Egyptian fears of a post-settlement Israeli plan to dominate the region politically and economically at the expense of Cairo's central position in the Arab state system; and Egypt's worries of its neighbor's nuclear arsenal and its attempts to neutralize it.

Trilateral Relations

"Since diplomatic relations were resumed in February 1974, Egypt had sought a free-standing, bilateral tie with the United States. Instead, following the Camp David package, Egypt found itself enmeshed in a superimposed, asymmetrical trilateral relationship. This meant, in effect, that Egypt was in part judged by Washington on how it conducted itself toward Israel. Whenever The Egyptian-Israeli link deteriorated for whatever reasons, US-Egyptian ties were reflexively strained."

Hermann Frederick Eilts, US Ambassador and scholar

On the 4th of April 1977, US President Jimmy Carter told President Sadat in their first White House meeting:

"I can see the possibility that ten years from now our ties to you in the economic, military and political spheres will be just as strong as the ties we now have with Israel."[122]

Carter also added that for that prediction to materialize, Egyptian-Israeli relations must be strong in the first place. Therefore, Quandt remarks, instead of establishing the basis of a strong bilateral relationship, "the American president was making clear that the relationship between Cairo and Washington would also have to involve Israel."[123]

To the disappointment of Egyptian statesmen, Carter's wish did not come true, for Egypt's stature in Washington never matched the elevated level Israel enjoyed. The reference he made about the involvement of the Israeli factor, however, became - again to the annoyance of Egyptian politicians - a fact of Egyptian-American relations. Thus, it is more accurate to speak of Egyptian-American relations as being trilateral rather than bilateral, where Israel is - albeit undeclared - the most powerful factor.

Following the signing of the Camp David Accords, the primacy of the Israeli factor in the eyes of American policymakers started to stand between Cairo and Washington. Cairo found itself increasingly trapped in an asymmetrical trilateral relationship in which it is judged, via Washington, by its attitude towards Israel. Whenever Egyptian-Israeli relations are strained,

Egyptian-US relations get tense as well. For example, Mubarak's decision in 1982 to withdraw the Egyptian ambassador from Tel Aviv in protestation of Israel's invasion of Lebanon was met with American disapproval, particularly in the Congress. The contentious issue bedeviled US-Egyptian bilateral relations for four whole years. Until Mubarak appointed a new ambassador in 1986, members of Congress would frequently ask Egyptian officials about when they planned to send back their ambassador to Tel Aviv. At times, in fact, "that seemed to be the most important issue in the bilateral relationship."[124] Therefore, the experience of the ambassador reminded the Egyptian leadership of the weight the pro-Israel lobby carries in American politics and its ability to damage its ties with Washington:

"If that lobby were ever to mount a major campaign against aid to Egypt, there is a serious question as to whether any administration would be able to provide the military and economic assistance that has become crucial to the relationship. And it would not take a very substantial deterioration in Egyptian-Israeli relations for the lobby to swing into action."[125]

Similar episodes surfaced along the same mechanisms each and every time Egyptian-Israeli relations got stressed. The Americans, for instance, were not content with the slow pace of normalization between Israel and Egypt and continued to raise the issue in their meetings with Egyptian officials. In 1985, the Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs asserted that:

"The Subcommittee remains concerned over the state of relations between Israel and Egypt and the impact which the low level relationship between these two important friends of the United States has on Middle East peace efforts…The Subcommittee believes it must be a high U.S. priority in 1985 to work with Egypt and Israel to prevent any further deterioration in Egyptian-Israeli relations and to overcome present difficulties…A "cold" peace does not serve U.S. interests or those of Israel or Egypt…*The Subcommittee would like to see improved Egyptian-Israeli political, diplomatic, cultural and economic ties.*"[126](Emphasis added)

The same kind of rhetoric was aired by the U.S. Congress in the course of all subsequent Egyptian-Israeli crises. Normalization with Israel dominated Egyptian-American talks on many occasions. During his 1988 visit to the United States, for example, the too vocal criticism forced President Mubarak to defend his policy towards Israel in his speech to the U.S. Congressional Foreign Affairs Committee.[127] Nonetheless, the worst attack on Egypt was waged in the summer of 2000 after the collapse of the Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations conducted at Camp David

under American auspices. Mubarak was accused of encouraging Yasser Arafat to taker tougher stances vis-à-vis Israel that, eventually, led to the failure of the talks hampering thereby the endeavors of the US to broker a historic comprehensive settlement of the decades-long Middle East conflict. Egyptian-American relations turned sour thereafter.[128]

A number of Egyptian scholars and diplomats have expressed their hope that the Israeli factor would cease to be the sole yardstick used to measure the quality of Egyptian-American relations. In a lecture given at the Sadat Forum at Brookings, Abdel Moneim Said, head of the Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies (and a pro-US scholar), said:

"Egypt should not only be measured by its relationship with Israel. I looked before I came here at the CIA web site on Egypt, and I found that in defining the geographical position of Egypt, they said that Egypt is neighboring Israel. Sudan and Libya were not mentioned…it is shocking…how some very important places like the CIA or the State Department regard Egypt."[129]

III US Foreign Policy Post-9/11

"The Way out is to develop a middle path, working with the Egyptian and Saudi governments to promote political and economic reform *–even if doing so requires them to loosen some controls and take some risks*."[130] (Emphasis added)

Martin Indyk, US Scholar and Diplomat

The foreign policy of the United States has undergone a remarkable transformation following the attacks of September 2001. Unprecedented in contemporary history, the Bush administration in response has undertaken what many depicted as a revolution in US foreign policy towards embracing the notions of unilateralism, militarism and regime change.

The stance of the American administration toward pro-US regimes in the Middle East entered a new era as well. Before 9/11, America's long-standing strategy revolved around "management through autocratic leaders, and "Don't rock the boat.""[131] According to Ambassador Edward Walker, who served in different Middle Eastern capitals:

"While we spoke of human rights, economic development, democracy and the rule of law, our policies and the distribution of our resources did not reflect our rhetoric. We neither

challenged the governments in the region to change nor offered incentives to help stimulate change."[132]

In an illuminating article published a few months after the attacks, Martin Indyk explained the difference the shock of 9/11 has generated with regards to America's grand strategy in the Middle East. Indyk goes back to the year 1993 when a new democratic administration - led by President Bill Clinton - had just assumed office. At the time, a group of US officials who were eager to campaign for democracy abroad asked Middle East specialists (Indyk included) why that region shall be exempt from the initiative. Those responsible for the files of the Middle East countered with an argument worth quoting:

"Our Case was straightforward. There was a window of opportunity to negotiate a comprehensive peace in the Middle East. If the negotiations were successful, that outcome would have a profound effect on the region….In the meantime, the United States could not afford the destabilizing impact that pressure for reform would generate in deeply traditional and repressed societies. Pushing hard for political change might not only disrupt the effort to promote peace but could also work against vital U.S. interests: stability in the oil-rich Persian Gulf and in strategically critical Egypt. The United States should therefore focus its energies on peacemaking…*and leaving friendly Arab regimes to deal with their internal problems as they saw fit*."[133] (Emphasis added).

Hence, Egypt's brutal handling of Islamists in the 1980s and 1990s passed by with perfect impunity. The logic changed, however, the moment the twin towers collapsed on the morning of September 11th. No one could ignore the fact that all the perpetrators of the horrendous attack came from the Arab World. A number of Saudis and an Egyptian were among the hijackers, as well as the organizers (Al-Qaeda organization is headed by a Saudi - Bin Laden - and an Egyptian – Al-Zawahry). In other words, the destruction of September 11 was made in the Arab world, surprisingly from countries whose regimes are long-standing friends of the US. As President Bush remarked, "Sixty years of Western nations excusing and accommodating the lack of freedom in the Middle East did nothing to make us safe."[134] Consequently, many in the corridors of Washington D.C. came to believe that the suppression of the Islamic opposition in the Middle East forced extremist elements to turn their guns elsewhere. Not able to target their own hardened regimes, Islamists decided to attack the patron that supported these corrupt regimes— the United States.

To cope with this new challenge, many of Washington's think tanks' experts and newspaper columnists suggested, the rationale underlying the conventional US foreign policy in the Middle East should be revisited. Condoning the irresponsible domestic policies of America's friends in the region would continue to threaten American national security. In the past, Washington preferred corruption to chaos, but in order to prevail over the post-9/11 enemy - terrorism - it obviously could not sustain her initial choice. According to Indyk, "if the United States is to "dry up the swamps" that generated the al Qaeda terrorist phenomenon, it is going to confront the dilemma of political change in the Arab world."[135]

Martin Indyk still acknowledges the serious dangers inherent in a reform process on long-established American interests in the region. However, he argues that if Arab regimes did not change the way they run their domestic affairs, they will ultimately fall anyway. So the best thing the American government can do to solve the dilemma is to encourage Egyptians and Saudis to introduce political and economic reforms, "even if doing so requires them to loosen some controls and take some risks."[136] From now on, he contends, America's friends in the Arab world "must know that political and economic reform will be an integral part of the ongoing U.S. agenda with them—a constant issue in diplomatic exchanges, a subject for congressional scrutiny, and a component of U.S. assistance programs."[137]

Indyk's views were not unique to American political debates after September 2001. In fact, his posture is considerably soft compared to many other analysts and commentators who promoted a harsher stance and a more aggressive foreign policy. For example, Neo-Conservatives[138] whose power and influence rose significantly in Bush's administration were in favor of a global strategy that is based on American preponderance in military power, disregard of international agreements and institutions if necessary and maximal control over the production and transportation of oil. More importantly, neo-cons - due to the extensive ties they have with Israel's Likud Party - developed a special interest in the Middle East. The commitment to securing the state of Israel was, and continues to be, one of their primary objectives in the region. Another is the notion of 'regime change' of rogue states[139]. In Asia, the Middle East and Latin America, Neo-cons have preferred replacing adversarial regimes to the Clinton administration's strategy of containing them. According to Max Boot, a staunch neo-con:

"Regime change may seem like a radical policy, but it is actually the best way to prevent a nuclear crisis that could lead to war. Endless negotiating with these governments—the preferred

strategy of self-described pragmatists and moderates—is likely to bring about the very crisis it is meant to avert."[140]

In *Special Providence: American Foreign Policy and How it Changed the World*, Walter Russell Mead associated certain foreign policy approaches with past American presidents as a way of distinguishing them. For example, the realists who pursue national interest and commerce are associated with Alexander Hamilton. Populists, who stress self-reliance and periodic use of coercion, are named after Andrew Jackson. 'Jeffersonians' are in favor of the pursuit of democracy by providing an appealing example to other nations. Finally, 'Wilsonians' are the idealists who emulate Woodrow Wilson in attempting to spread democracy worldwide. Neo-conservatives basically follow Wilson's wish, but drop his interest in international institutions. According to that categorization, the US foreign policy after 9/11 was undertaken by a blend of Jacksonians (e.g. Vice President Dick Cheney and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld) and neoconservative Wilsonians (e.g. Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz).[141]

Cairo was terribly alarmed when it noticed that the talk of neo-cons in their low-circulation magazines and insulated thank tanks started to gain popularity among loads of intellectuals and politicians, including some of President Bush's closest aides. The National Security Strategy promulgated by the U.S. government in September 2002 called for US global domination, the promotion of democracy abroad as well as forceful action, preemptive if needed, against terrorism and weapons of mass destruction proliferation**.** It was "a quintessentially neoconservative document."[142] The case of Iraq was particularly revealing of the extent of the power neo-cons master in the American political system and their ability to transform ideas into specific action. Since the tenets of neo-cons were turned in Iraq into official policy, it was hard to escape the theory that neo-cons have indeed hijacked American foreign policy.

After a brief period of cooperation against terrorism after September, 11, the principle of advancing the cause of political reform in the Middle East began to trouble Egyptian-American relations.[143] The Bush administration started to regard Egypt "as ripe for change – and possibly an eventual example of the kind of democratic change President Bush has vowed to promote in the region."[144] American pressure took three distinct forms: initiatives taken by the United States (usually in coordination with other Western countries) to spread the culture of democracy and plurality in the region; announcements made by top American officials criticizing current conditions in Egypt and calling for changing them; and newspaper articles in leading US papers

condemning the Egyptian government's stance towards political reform and human rights and harshly attacking Mubarak himself while, at the same time, pushing President Bush to show more seriousness and resolve in his dealing with the Egyptian regime.

The initial form includes first and foremost President Bush's 'Greater Middle East initiative' (GMEI) launched in the spring of 2004 and later endorsed by world leaders in the meeting of the G-8 in Sea Island, Georgia. The initiative is a broad-based policy initiative aimed at democratic governance and economic development in the area stretching from Pakistan to Morocco. Politically, the GMEI encourages the conduct of regular free elections, the provision of more freedom of action for political parties, the promotion of liberties and increased margins of freedom of expression, and the maintenance of the independence of the judiciary. Numerous socio-cultural objectives like combating illiteracy and empowering women are also on the GMEI's agenda. President Bush declared that the "spread of freedom throughout the broader Middle East is the imperative of our age."[145] The initiative, he said, "will seek to advance the universal values of human dignity, freedom, democracy, the rule of law, economic and social justice"[146].

Mubarak – with an eye on maintaining his unquestioned authority at home - virulently opposed the plan. He stressed that reform should be home-born and not forced from the outside. According to the daily *Al-Ahram*, Mubarak "denounced with force the ready-for-use prescriptions proposed abroad under cover of what are called reforms, and attempts to impose them on the region"[147]. Mubarak, the newspaper added, believed "reforms are necessary and inevitable, on condition that they come from within and conform to the needs and convictions of the peoples."[148] To Mubarak, the initiative sounded "as if the region and its states do not exist" or "as if they have no sovereignty over their land, no ownership."[149] The *Washington Post* wrote that the Egyptian President represented "the largest obstacle" to Bush's vision of the new Middle East.[150] Indeed, Egypt and Saudi Arabia (largely believed to be the main targets of the GMEI) coordinated their efforts to disrupt Bush's plans of remodeling the Middle East.

Statements of US officials, likewise, raised Egyptian concerns about the real intentions of the US administration. No speech, press conference or interview given by any senior US official after the Iraq war did not include some reference to the issue of reform and democracy in the Middle East. "Are the peoples of the Middle East somehow beyond the reach of liberty"[151], President Bush asked. He declared that the United States had "adopted a new policy, a forward

strategy in the Middle East" that would rely on American "persistence, and energy and idealism"[152]. Implying that the success of his Mideast vision depends on Egypt's compliance, a special reference to Egypt was made: "the great and proud nation of Egypt has shown the way toward peace in the Middle East…and now should show the way toward democracy in the Middle East"[153].

The April 2004 meeting between President Bush and President Mubarak in Crawford, Texas witnessed an escalation in the push for reform. During the press conference, Bush said:

"President Mubarak and I spoke about the future of the region and of Egypt….just as Egypt has shown the way toward peace in the Middle East, it will set the standard in the region for democracy by strengthening democratic institutions and political participation."[154]

The statement is mild and void of any direct criticism but, as a distinguished professor at Georgetown University reminds us, "anyone familiar with presidential meetings knows that any criticism of a friendly leader during a visit would be phrased gently."[155] The Crawford meeting was therefore significant since the United States turned in it "a new page in its bilateral relationship with Egypt – one on which the issue of political reform is clearly inscribed."[156] Discontented with Bush's attitude during that summit, Mubarak decided not to hold his annual visits to the US (regular since 1981), dispatching his Prime Minister Ahmed Nazif the following year instead. Other senior US officials - notably Vice President Dick Cheney and National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice - have expressed their regret about the major mistake committed by successive US governments in their dealings with Middle Eastern regimes, namely preferring stability over democracy, and vowed a transformation of approach. In a speech at the American University in Cairo, Rice stated:

"For 60 years, my country, the United States, pursued stability at the expense of democracy in this region here in the Middle East -- and we achieved neither. Now, we are taking a different course."[157]

Furthermore, the attacks on the Egyptian regime and president in US newspapers and magazines were relentless and harsh leading to far-reaching repercussions. Articles and opinion pieces appearing in the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, or the *Christian Science Monitor* contributed to Cairo's increased feeling about a well-orchestrated American offense to impose democracy and intensified the nervousness of Cairo's rulers. There has always been a belief among Egyptian politicians that opinions expressed in the US media are not entirely separated

from the mood of the White House or the State Department. Press campaigns are seen, accordingly, as official policy. It was reported in *Al-Hayat* that Egyptian diplomatic sources said that Egypt was concerned about the "frivolous discussion in the [American] media" of Egypt's internal affairs. The London daily added that Egypt used diplomatic channels to express its displeasure about the "negative atmosphere" produced by leaks to the American press from numerous circles within the U.S. administration.[158] An official statement was usually issued in Cairo in response to any alleged media attack and a green light was in the meantime given to Egypt's semi-official media to respond to 'fallacious American claims'. For example, Ibrahim Sa'dah, editor-in-chief of *Akhbar Al-Yawm*, wrote:

"For a number of reasons known to us and a few unknown to us, the U.S. media – especially the most popular and influential newspapers – have been publishing many lies and fabrications about Egypt, its positions, policy and reforms."[159]

A "war of articles" usually ensued. Egypt's exaggerated sensitivity towards criticism emanating from Washington makes it seem, as one prominent Egyptian scholar, Abdel Monem Said, noticed, "as though one or two US editorials about a country as important and influential as Egypt are sufficient to so inflame passions as to cause us to lose sight of the reality that governs bilateral relations."[160] Expressing his displeasure at the Egyptian media's over-reaction to an article written by Thomas Friedman, Said said: "our own press over-reacted and made Egypt look like a country that could be shaken by an article in The New York Times."[161]

A very good example of such kinds of articles is the piece entitled "Egypt: Key to the Mideast" published in the prestigious and wide-circulating *Newsweek* on June, 21 2004. The author, Christopher Dickey, asked the G8 leaders to look first at Cairo if they really want to spread reform throughout the Middle East. Egypt not Iraq, Dickey argues, "may just be the best bet the Arab world has for the kind of contagious political reform the region needs."[162] Without Egypt, he contends, "no movement toward greater democracy is likely to gather much momentum. With it, the chance for real change grows exponentially."[163] Needless to say, the commentary reverberated strongly in the presidential palaces and cafes of Cairo, bringing about alarm among its political elite and intellectuals alike. Both have started to seriously ponder about real American intentions in the Middle East.

The reason behind that unprecedented pressure is debatable. In the period following the fall of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, Washington's hawks, especially in the Department of

Defense, were determined on a plan of changing the Iraqi regime by force. To circumvent the State Department's efforts to avoid a war, they considered sabotaging U.S. relations with the Arab world. It is interesting to note what Edward Walker said as early as November 2001:

"They [Washington's hawks] want to foment a crisis in the relations between the two countries (the U.S. and Egypt) at this point in time, because this would eliminate the policy of the American secretary of state for the establishment of a coalition, and would give them the right to go to the American President and tell him that this policy will not succeed and we must attack Iraq…The best way to demonstrate the failure of Powell's policy is to invent stories in order to prove that our allies in the Middle East, Egypt and Saudi Arabia are not cooperating with us."[164]

The second probable reason assumes that democratization in the Middle East is not (in fact, has never been) on the agenda of the United States policy in the region and that the pressure mounted for implementing reform is simply just a tool harnessed to stimulate concessions from Middle eastern regimes on other regional issues, notably Iraq and Israel. Faced with a deteriorating security situation in Iraq and a failure of the venture of state-building, the US badly needed the political support of its Arab allies for its policy initiatives there. The US administration also needed to extract concessions from Arab regimes on the imperative issues of promoting Arab-Israeli peace and containing the Syrian and Iranian regimes.

Like a stone thrown in the stagnant waters of the region's lifeless political systems, the American talk of political reform triggered serious political developments in the Middle East. The concept of reform started to set in political debates and demands for change garnered unprecedented momentum. Fareed Zakaria wrote in *Newsweek*:

"Bush's efforts to push for reform in the Arab world — despite the irritation it caused — has put the topic front and center on the region's agenda. Everywhere in the Arab world, people are talking about reform…'People won't admit it, but three years ago reform was something few talked about' said a Jordanian diplomat.' Today it's everywhere."[165]

Similarly, the President of the University of Kuwait wrote in *The Daily Star*:

"The issue of reform was not even addressed in the Arab region a few months ago…It was officially dealt with when the U.S. administration brought it up. Talk of reform will most probably disappear if the U.S. administration stops calls for it."

In Egypt, a state of 'political mobilization' emerged in a manner previously unimagined, so that "(s)uddenly the popular wisdom that Egyptians are passive and afraid to act did not seem to be holding up."[166] Fresh political movements were established, various acts of dissent were organized on a daily basis and voices demanding Mubarak's step-down were frequently heard. The genie was out of the bottle and the regime was shaken like never before[167], in fact torn between the hammer and the anvil, namely internal and external pressures. To alleviate outside pressure, it turned eastwards.

IV Egyptian-Israeli Relations: From Cold War to Warm Peace

"There will be no solution with Sharon. He is a man who knows nothing but killing, beating and war."
Hosni Mubarak (19 July 2001)

"If the Palestinians do not manage to achieve progress in the time of the current prime minister (Ariel Sharon), it will be difficult to make any progress, because Sharon has the ability to move along the peace process and find a solution if he wants to."
Hosni Mubarak (November 2004)

To the astonishment of political commentators, the end of the year 2004 witnessed a sudden improvement in Egyptian-Israeli relations. The indicators of that improvement included an unexpected prisoners' exchange, positive public statements made by the leaders of the two countries and the conclusion of a major trade agreement, the largest since Camp David.

On December 5, Azzam Azzam, an imprisoned Israeli spy was released in return for six Egyptian university students who had been arrested in Israel on charges of attempting to penetrate the borders in order to commit suicide attacks. The fact that Azzam had been sentenced eight years earlier to a 15-year verdict, whereas the Egyptian students had not been found guilty yet (and were widely believed in Cairo to be innocent campers who had lost their way in the desert of Sinai just to be arrested by Israeli guards on the borders) triggered suspicions that the deal was of a political nature. Every Israeli Prime Minister in the period from 1997 to 2004 raised the issue of Azzam in his talks with his Egyptian interlocutors and demanded his immediate release. The response of Egyptian officials was always almost identical: Azzam was

convicted by the Egyptian judiciary and the Egyptian law can not be disregarded. Israel tried to use its influence in Washington (particularly the US Congress and media) to pressurize the Egyptian government to free its valued prisoner, but to no avail. Many Egyptians do not trust their intelligence agencies, and had been, thus, suspicious of the validity of the charges filed against Azzam. But Tel Aviv's unrelenting insistence on his release made them believe that Azzam was, indeed, guilty.

The comparison between the Egyptian deal and the one obtained by Hizbullah nine months earlier made the Egyptian exchange look seriously bad. In return for the bodies of three Israeli soldiers and an Israeli businessman detained by Hizbullah, Israel released 400 Palestinians, 30 Lebanese (including two Hizbullah leaders) in addition to the bodies of 59 Lebanese.[168]

A few days before the prisoners' exchange, the Egyptian President had made an unprecedented statement; Mubarak praised Sharon's commitment to peace and urged the Palestinians not to miss the chance of him being in power: "If the Palestinians do not manage to achieve progress in the time of the current prime minister", "it will be difficult to make any progress, because Sharon has the ability to move along the peace process and find a solution if he wants to." He added that Sharon "only asks for one thing: the end of explosions."[169] Mubarak's unexpected statement shocked his people and confused political analysts. As a matter of fact, it was tantamount to a notorious announcement President Bush had made in 2002 when he described Sharon – amidst the conduct of a large Israeli military operation in the West Bank - as "a man of peace". At the time, the imprudent comment of Bush triggered widespread Arab anger and resentment and put an end in fact to anything that was left from the legacy of the so-called 'fair peace broker'. For the president of Egypt to take a position vis-à-vis Israel that is analogous to that of a bias American president was certainly astonishing.

In fact, both leaders became "uncharacteristically complimentary"[170] to each other. In a phone call following the release exchange, Mubarak told the Israeli premier: "I did it especially for you."[171] Sharon replied by saying: "I believe that together we can bring major achievements for future generations."[172] Mubarak's statement is in stark contrast with his well-established stance towards Ariel Sharon since the latter rose to power in the spring of 2001. Furious at the irreparable damage Sharon had caused to the peace process, Mubarak frequently criticized him, condemned his policies and expressed little hope in any possible change in his attitude. Unlike

his predecessors (Nasser and Sadat), Mubarak's public discourse rarely included insults or harsh criticism, but his resentment of Sharon's policies had reached an unprecedented level that in July 2001 he described Sharon – in an interview with a Chinese news agency - as a man "*who knows nothing but killing, beating and war*."[173](Emphasis added) He thus anticipated that "*there will be no solution with Sharon*."[174](Emphasis added)

The release of prisoners was followed with an agreement to name a new Egyptian ambassador to Israel, a position that has been vacant since November 2000 when Cairo recalled its ambassador from Tel Aviv in protestation over Israel's brutal handling of the second Palestinian uprising. Egypt had since then insisted that its ambassador would not return to Tel Aviv before Israel withdrew its troops to its pre-*Intifada* positions (September 28,' 2000). Concurrently, Egyptian officials (Mubarak included) criticized the imprisoned Palestinian leader Marwan Barghouti's decision to run for the Palestinian Presidency elections scheduled for January 2005, another sign of progress in Egyptian-Israeli ties, analysts asserted.

Egyptian-Israeli cooperation reached its zenith on December, 14 when both countries - along with the United States – signed the Qualified Industrial Zones Treaty (QIZ). The agreement allows Egyptian products exported to the American market an entry free of duties and customs, provided that at least 11.7% of the exported goods are manufactured in Israel. The deal - a breakthrough in Egyptian-Israeli economic relations - was considered by many as 'a second Camp David' — "the most significant economic agreement between Egypt and Israel in 20 years"[175], as the US Trade Representative who attended the signing ceremony called it. A few months later, a $2.5 billion gas deal was also concluded, according to which Egypt would supply natural gas to Israel for fifteen years at discounted prices.

In addition to the extraordinary political breakthrough and the unprecedented level of economic cooperation, Mubarak reportedly attempted - in absolute contradiction with Egypt's traditional policy - to end Israel's isolation in the Arab world. During a trip to the Persian Gulf in December 2004, Mubarak encouraged the establishment of diplomatic relations between Gulf states and Israel. In the same month, the Israeli Minister of Foreign Affairs Silvan Shalom said that his foreign policy since he entered into office has had two main goals: improving relations with the Arab world and enhancing ties with Europe.[176] Shalom predicted that ten Arab countries will soon establish diplomatic relations with Israel, including some of the Gulf sheikhdoms.

The sudden upgrading of bilateral relations was not intended to be temporary. In the first few months of 2005, Egyptian-Israeli relations have warmed up in all fields, reported the well-informed daily *Ha'aretz*. In July, the Israeli Ambassador to Cairo said that bilateral relations with Egypt are at their best level since very long years.[177]

The hurried rapprochement is at odds with the 25-year heritage of Egyptian-Israeli relations characterized with animosity, tension and competition; the country "that had once been routinely pilloried…was now signing an important trade deal with Egypt."[178] An Israeli commentator observed that "the security cooperation, the political coordination and the close relations formed between heads of the different security apparatuses, have turned the state of affairs between the [two] countries to the best it has been since the initial 'honeymoon" immediately after the signing of the 1979 peace accord."[179] The fact that these positive developments came just after the killing of three Egyptian soldiers by Israeli fire at the borders was indeed perplexing. Furthermore, the rapprochement came while Israel continued to mercilessly kill Palestinians and embark on plans to build new settlements in the Golan Heights. In light of this contrast, Abdel-Wahab Badrakhan, Deputy Editor-in-chief of *Al-Hayat*, sarcastically states that Israel has all the right to consider its policies correct as long as it keeps implementing the worst policies but still reaps the best results.[180] The confusion of intellectuals at the incongruity of Egypt's new policies towards Israel with regional developments was well-articulated by political analyst Fahmy Howeidy: "when one smells the 'pleasant fragrance' of Egyptian-Israeli relations and – at the same time – smells gunpowder and blood in Palestine coupled with slyness and deceit in the Golan, which shall he believe?"[181] Expressing bewilderment too, Kamel wrote: "One would have anticipated that with the ongoing carnage in Iraq, constant US threats against Iran and Syria, and Israel's recent killing of three Egyptian border police, Egypt would have taken a tougher stance. But the exact opposite happened".[182]

From an economic point of view, the QIZ agreement stands in contrast with the mediocre level of Egyptian-Israeli trade. For example, total Israeli exports to Egypt between 1994 and 2000 stood at $181 million only. In fact, Egyptian imports from Israel constituted about 0.3% of total Egyptian imports in the year 2000.[183]

The u-turn change in the foreign policy attitude was described by analysts and commentators as "puzzling"[184], "startling"[185], revealing a "major policy shift"[186], "a sea change"[187] "an exciting qualitative development"[188] or even more "a significant restructuring of

Egyptian diplomacy"[189] which renders it "as historic as the signing of the Camp David Accords"[190]. The QIZ in particular is, as one Egyptian journalist put it, "a title for a new comprehensive approach… [It represents] a change in defining Egyptian interests in its broad sense."[191] Hassan Nafaa, Director of the Political Science Department at Cairo University, notes that the Egyptian initiative seemed "ambiguous, unintelligible and maybe illogical at all."[192] He argues that these developments demonstrate that the Egyptian diplomacy is undergoing a revolutionary change in the way it manages the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The QIZ Deal: Contending Arguments

"Regardless of its economic framework, it is a political agreement"[193]
Refaat Al-Saeed, Egyptian Politician

Surprisingly, Egypt had been rejecting the QIZ offer since the year 1996. The QIZ idea originated in 1995 when the representatives of the United States, Israel, Egypt, Jordan and the Palestinian Authority met at Blair House and agreed to extend duty-free status to selected border areas between Israel and her neighbors. In 1996, the plan was finalized with President Clinton's declaration that allowed goods manufactured in these areas (QIZs) a duty-free entrance into the US market. However, Egypt - for obvious political reasons – turned down the offer. For example, Egypt's Foreign Minister Amr Moussa resisted in October 1999 the pressure of US Secretary of Commerce William Daley to push for the issue and reiterated that Egypt is committed to its stance towards Israel, which links enhanced cooperation with real progress achieved in the peace process. Nevertheless, all scenarios proposed by US officials to help liberate Egyptian textile exports from the quota system involved Egyptian QIZs and Egyptian economic cooperation with businesses in Israel. All were refused.[194]

The logic used by the Egyptian government to promote the QIZ deal was purely economical. Egyptian officials referred to the fact that the Multi-Fiber Agreement (MFA) will be phased out by January 2005 by the provisions of the World Trade Organization (WTO). As a result, the quotas of textiles and apparel will be abolished by the United States. Egypt, therefore, will be pushed out of the American market by the cheap and high-quality products of Asian exporters like China and India and lose thereby $500 million of annual textile exports to the US. With no Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the US, nor one actually in sight, the QIZ seemed

like the only option left to maintain Egypt's current level of textile exports, or even better increase it. Indeed, the textiles and garments industry - employing more than one million people and accounting for about 27% of total industrial production and approximately 25% of total export revenues in 2004 – was the largest sector represented in the QIZ scheme, making up 77% of the 471 registered business entities.[195]

The agreement that "was sealed in the nick of time"[196] took both the Egyptian public and intellectuals alike by surprise. In trying to sell the deal to a skeptical public, government officials gave a number of flashy promises. They expected the deal to generate one hundred thousand new job opportunities (the number was raised a few days later to 250,000 and then again to one million). Levels of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) received by Egypt will also rise to $5 billion in the next five years, they promised. The example of Jordan who signed the QIZ in 1999 and whose exports to the US witnessed a significant growth since then was used to confirm the wise step of signing the deal and to promise the accrual of similar economic benefits. A number of businessmen, whose interests are served by the QIZ, jumped too on the preaching bandwagon.

Proponents argued too that the deal is a necessary step towards attaining an FTA agreement with the United States. The US had already signed FTAs with Israel, Jordan and Morocco. Also, an FTA with Bahrain was awaiting congressional approval and negotiations had been initiated with Oman and the United Arab Emirates. Egypt, certainly, was anxious to enjoy the benefits of an FTA.

In the face of attempts made by a number of MPs to put the QIZ deal to open discussion at the People's Assembly, however, the government responded by claiming that the QIZ is not exactly a treaty that requires the ratification of the parliament, but rather a trade protocol. Kamal Al-Shazly, Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and a leading figure in the ruling National Democratic Party, said that the QIZ agreement "is an executive protocol that was signed by the industry and foreign trade minister rather than the president. It will only be deposited in the assembly as a document."[197] Many intellectuals were not convinced though.[198] Badrakhan said that it was the right of everybody to know why Egypt has refused this deal ever since 1996 and whether the reasons for that refusal were no longer valid leading the government to change its initial position.[199] Also, opposition MPs insisted that keeping them in the dark was a violation of the constitution. Gamal Mubarak felt compelled to defend the QIZ. He reminded his interlocutors that "Egypt has a peace treaty with Israel" and that this relationship "is more a tool

aimed at serving Palestinians and Arab causes than an end in itself."[200] The criticism waged by different political forces and intellectuals from across the political spectrum forced President Mubarak to defend the move as well. In a surprise appearance at the NDP's Parliamentary Committee, Mubarak contended that the deal serves the country's "supreme national interests". He emphasized the economic rationale underlying the QIZ by saying "Egypt would no longer agree to remain a spectator to everything that was going in the region while others reap all the benefits at the end."[201] As usual, religion was harnessed to silence critics[202]; Egypt's *Mufti* gave a *fatwa* (religious verdict) that considered the QIZ Treaty, like any other economic treaty, a form of admissible commerce.[203]

Egyptian economic experts countered the economic logic of the government. Ahmed Al-Sayed Al-Naggar, the leading economic expert at Al-ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, saw the agreement as "the worst thing that has happened to Egypt since it signed the Camp David peace agreement in 1979."[204] He added that "the economic benefits for Egypt will be limited. Without an improvement in quality and production standards, Egyptian textiles will still have a hard time competing with their Asian counterparts. In the absence of quotas, the QIZ will make no difference to us."[205] Former Minister of Economy Mustafa Al-Saeed listed five essential reservations about the accord. First, the accord exhibited a remarkable bias to Israel, for whereas Egyptian made products would only be exempted from US duties if a certain component of them is made in Israel, the opposite does not hold true. The agreement would have been much more balanced had it likewise obliged Israeli goods exported to the US to include Egyptian inputs. Second, the provisions of the agreement are less favorable to Egypt when compared with the Jordanian QIZ, for the percentage of required Israeli input is 11.7% in the Egyptian deal as opposed to only 8% in the Jordanian case. Compared to tiny and empty Jordan, the political weight, size and population of Egypt should have entitled her to a better - or at least similar - deal, but unfortunately it did not. Third, the deal contradicts the tenets of free trade advocated by both the WTO and the government of the United States since it gives Israeli suppliers a monopolistic position over Egyptian manufacturers; the latter will not be able to go into the American market without the input of the former. Consequently, a rise of the prices of these inputs is highly likely, inevitably leading to an increase in the cost of the final product.[206] This increase will reduce the benefits of eliminating American duties, which do not in all cases exceed five percent. Fourth, the claim that the QIZ is the only option to increase (or maintain) Egyptian

textile exports to the US is not plausible. Numerous countries such as China, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Turkey have managed to augment their level of textile exports without having to sign such agreements. Finally, Al-Saeed maintains that Egypt's natural sphere - no matter what - remains the Arab world, a space which provides the best basis for the real development of the Egyptian economy. He wonders thus about the impact close Egyptian-Israeli cooperation in the economic realm would have on the efforts of regional Arab economic integration.[207]

Many other arguments were advanced to illustrate the flawed economic rationale presented by the government. For instance, Howeidy rightly argued that the American market - albeit big - is not the only outlet available for exporting Egyptian products. Europe, he reminded, is geographically closer and the European Union (EU) has been promoting a program for modernizing Egypt's industries for years now. Africa too is close and has been an important market for Egyptian products for decades.[208] Moreover, by designing a whole program to facilitate exports to just one country, Egypt would be perpetuating its already high economic dependence on the United States. Political analyst Mahmud Awad, a regular columnist for *Al-Hayat,* agrees with Howeidy about the significance of the European market to the Egyptian economy. He refers to an agreement Egypt has signed with the EU that does encourage economic cooperation in the Middle Eastern region, but does not require Egypt to buy industrial inputs from just one country like the QIZ rigidly does. Rather, a list of eight Arab countries in addition to Turkey, Malta, Cyprus and Israel is available, which provides a wider pool of choice and a smaller chance of monopoly, so why did the regime, he suspects, prefer the QIZ to the European deal?[209] In fact, patterns of Egypt's outside trade show that the EU is the major importer of Egyptian textile exports. In 2002 and 2003, it received 37% and 36% of Egypt's exports respectively, as opposed to 28% absorbed by the US market in both years.[210] Renowned economic expert Galal Amin laments Egypt's reluctance to join any Arab or international effort to stimulate economic cooperation. He refers to a visit paid by the Brazilian President to Cairo, during which he proposed the formation of an economic coalition of Third world states to resist global economic pressures. Egypt, however, declined and Brazil sought cooperation elsewhere, in India and South Africa.[211] In short, the Egyptian regime was not interested in Europe, Africa, the Arab world or the Third world. Its eyes were only focused on the United States.

Awad questions too the validity of the official estimates of increasing employment and foreign investment resulting from the QIZ. The figures the government used to promote the deal

are, at best, half truths and, at worst, entirely misleading.[212] Foreign investment has declined since 2000 to a low $237 million in the year preceding the QIZ.[213] Therefore, expecting it to rise to $5 billion is, to say the least, a dramatized exaggeration. Moreover, the claim that the QIZ would enable Egypt to maintain (or step up) Egypt's level of exports to the US currently determined by the quota is flawed, since Egypt has already failed for the past ten years to fulfill the assured quota except once.[214] In other words, exports depend in the first place on production and if, in the past, that production, for a reason or another (e.g. low quality), could not reach the US market despite the presence of a guaranteed share, then, it would be questionable to assume success in a free trade system, even if aided with the generous QIZ provisions.

The Jordanian QIZ 'success story', another reason put forward by the government to legitimize the deal was also refuted by commentators and market analysts. Indeed, Jordan's exports did surprisingly increase following the QIZ[215], but her imports, analysts reminded, witnessed a dramatic increase too. In fact, most of the income earned by exports generated by the QIZ was absorbed by a high import bill necessitated by the QIZ operations. Meanwhile, the balance of trade between Jordan and Israel started to tilt in favor of Israel. Jordanian exports to Israel had constituted seven times its imports from her in the year 1999, but in the period from 1999 to 2003, Israeli exports doubled 16 times. In the first five months of 2004, Israeli exports to Jordan rose by 46% in return for a mere 5% increase in Jordanian exports to Israel.[216] As a result, the trade balance with Israel that had witnessed a Jordanian surplus of $23.8 million in 1999 turned into a deficit of $25.9 in 2003.[217] In other words, the so-called 'success story' of Jordan was not exactly very successful in the first place. Besides, the increase in Jordan's exports occurred at a time when restrictions were imposed on other countries' exports to the United States (via the quota system), whereas Egypt would face a fierce competition from other producers, especially Asian, since the implementation of its QIZ coincides with abolishing the quota system and the opening up of the US market.[218]

The claim that the QIZ Treaty was the only available option to save the textile industry was absurd to some as well. Al-Naggar finds it difficult to believe that the survival of the textile industry would be contingent on the services of the state of Israel, for the former – with a heritage of 175 years – is, ironically, three times the age of the latter. It would be more reasonable, he adds, to admit that the industry suffers from some structural deficiencies that need to be properly addressed instead of signing an agreement that comprises a high economic and

political cost. He also notes that the textile and clothing exports of countries like Syria and Tunisia exceed $4 billion annually, without of course any political price attached.[219]

Only three industrial zones were selected to join the QIZ (in Greater Cairo, Alexandria and Port Said). Consequently, the areas that lie outside these geographical zones (which include some of the oldest and most well-established industrial plants) would heavily suffer as it would be increasingly difficult for them to compete with the zones included in the deal. Thus, one can argue, as Al-Naggar did, that the QIZ deal contravenes the Egyptian constitution that stipulates that all citizens (and business entities) are equal.[220] Many contended that the criteria for selecting the QIZ zones were not based solely on business considerations, but rather on personal connections. In a country where corruption is ubiquitous and the road to governmental contracts depends largely upon access to the high echelons of power, such allegations can not be excluded altogether. Certainly, the fact that major textile industrial areas, such as Al-Mehalla and Ismailia were excluded from the deal poured fuel on these allegations.

Furthermore, the feeding industries, usually small and medium-sized workshops that flourish on specializing in supplying bigger factories with parts of the final product, would normally be replaced by Israeli suppliers to ensure the fulfillment of the 11.7% quota required to enter the American market. Many of them would, therefore, ultimately be forced to go out of business.

The QIZ grants Israel a preferential trade treatment, since Israeli contributions will enter the Egyptian zones free of duties. In other words, the QIZ is very much equivalent in essence to a free trade agreement between Egypt and Israel. Accordingly, Israel would have a high chance of developing wide-ranging trade ties with Egypt (most probably at the expense of Egypt's relations with the Arab world), especially since there is no real guarantee its contribution would ultimately be exported to the US; some of its exports might in fact enter the Egyptian market instead.[221] Interestingly, the Egyptian government frequently warned against stepping up economic relations with the Jewish state before comprehensive peace is realized and instead persistently preached about the huge benefits of an Arab Common Market that, in the words of Mubarak, is the only hope in an age of giant economic groupings. In an interview with the Egyptian radio, Mubarak responded to a question about his wishes for the year 2004 by stating 'enhanced cooperation between Arab countries' as one of his wishes, and adding that the Arab Common

Market is a hope that will sooner or later materialize and that some steps in that direction have already been taken.[222]

Moreover, the Israeli inputs embedded in products with final Egyptian brand names would be consumed by Egyptian consumers and, if exported to Arab countries, Arab consumers as well, many of whom are principally reluctant to buy Israeli goods in protest of Israel's policies. The QIZ, in short, would be the Trojan horse that allows Israel to penetrate Arab markets and revitalize the defunct Arab-Israeli economic normalization. It is a new form of the notion of the Middle Eastern market that - ten years earlier - had been preached by Shimon Peres in every forum and meeting he attended, till it came to an end in the 1997 Middle East and North Africa (MENA) conference in Doha against a backdrop of Netanyaho's hawkish attitude.[223]

Despite repeated official assertions, economic considerations were not responsible for the sudden change of heart. In the first four months of implementing the QIZ (from January to April 2005), the share of QIZ exports to Egypt's total exports stood, according to the American Chamber of Commerce in Egypt, at 1.54%. It is inconceivable that such a major policy shift was taken for the sake of just one and a half percent of exports. By the end of 2005, Egypt had boosted its textiles exports to the US by a meager 5.3%, from $421.6 in 2004 to $443.8 in 2005. Moreover, in the second quarter of 2006, the Egyptian government announced that out of 655 firms qualified to take part in the QIZ, only 137 companies managed to export products to the US.[224] Two and a half years after the deal, an analyst stated that "all signatories to the agreement have achieved modest gains".[225] Economic gains were insignificant for Israel too. Israel's trade with Jordan and Egypt together represents less than one percent of its total trade.[226]

The Egyptian government was terribly embarrassed when the list of economic benefits it provided to justify the QIZ turned out to be unimpressive and weak. It tried therefore to sell the deal again by referring to a number of political benefits resulting from the negotiations with Israel. The list included, as reported in Egyptian newspapers:

- Sharon agreed to facilitate the Palestinian elections and coordinate with the Palestinian Authority about Israel's withdrawal from Gaza.
- An Israeli pledge was secured to implement the 'Road Map' as soon as Palestinians manage their 'security' responsibilities.

- International financial aid will be provided to Palestinians to conduct the elections, pay deferred wages and buy equipment for the police force.
- The Israeli Prime Minister agreed to meet with Abu Mazen and Abu Qurei after elections.
- Tel Aviv approved to the deployment of 750 Egyptian soldiers along the Egyptian-Israeli borders.[227]

Remarkably, the list is related to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Egypt attempted to prove that its deal with Israel went hand in hand with important 'gains' for the Palestinian people. However, it strains credibility to think Israel's Palestinian policy had much to do with the QIZ. The real political considerations were kept from the public, however.

Regime Survival

"QIZ is the price Egypt pays for the maintenance of the regime."[228]
Mohamed Al-Saeed Idris, scholar

To Egypt, political motives lie at the heart of the QIZ deal and the rest of developments that preceded and followed it, in particular Mubarak's eagerness to reduce mounting American pressure and his keenness to maintain his regime's unconditional authority at home. It is a well-known fact to insiders and observers that Mubarak, in his private talks, shows no restraints in viciously attacking the policies of President George W. Bush.[229] Appeasing the United States per se is far from being Mubarak's objective; it is merely a tool to serve his own interests. As a political analyst shrewdly put it, "The public opinion thinks that Mubarak is a stooge of the United States, and that is not true. Mubarak is no one's stooge; he is a self-centered man and he is now engaged in a real battle with them (the Americans)."[230]

The timing of the deal is crucial in understanding its fundamental motive. In November 2004, President George W. Bush was reelected. A continuation of his Middle East policy, in which neo-conservatives play a major role, was thus guaranteed. To avoid pressure from the not-very-friendly Bush administration and an observant Congress that has been critical to Egypt in the past few years over its gross human rights abuses and its insufficient efforts to promote political reform, Mubarak felt he had to act. Since the threat posed by the US - the world's only

superpower and the provider of economic and military aid to Egypt - was overwhelming, and since no allies could be rallied against the US, the best strategy was to bandwagon.

It is interesting, here, to note that Brent Scowcroft, former White House national security adviser, told *The Financial Times* that President Bush "is mesmerized by the Israeli Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon".[231] The Israeli factor loomed large. As Abdel Monem Said observed:

"Turning this [Bush's re-election] into an opportunity rather than a liability required the improvement of Egyptian-Israeli relations. This in turn will help improve Egyptian-American relations, which reached a low point following Washington's talk of wholesale reforms in the Middle East"[232].

Smadar Perry, the Middle East editor at *Yediot Aharonot* newspaper, concurs: "Had US President George W. Bush not been elected to a second term…Mubarak would not have taken the trouble to scrape the frost off of nearly 20 years of cold peace"[233], she says.

Indeed, the expectations of Egyptian policy-makers did come true. Following the improvement in Egyptian-Israeli relations, Cairo's relationship with Washington witnessed a dramatic improvement. The US agreed to launch negotiations over a free trade agreement, released $300 million assigned to Egypt in compensation over the losses it incurred as a result of the Iraq war and Cairo was once again upgraded to its natural place in Washington.[234] Moreover, as a Cairo-based journalist noticed, Cairo "suddenly gained the amity of many of those lobbyists once working against it."[235] Washington thus turned a blind eye to the wide excesses that accompanied the presidential and parliamentary elections held in September and November/December 2005 respectively. To Washington, human rights and democracy come next in priority to tangible interests and the Egyptian regime understood this fact very well.

Certainly, Business communities in both countries played a major role in the agreement. In fact, Egyptian businessmen began negotiations without official involvement, but, of course, with the blessing of President Mubarak. The Egyptian state got involved in the final stages when it saw a clear political advantage in the deal. Egyptian negotiators were, then, even pressured by their government to "fast track" the negotiations.[236]

In short, Mubarak's uncharacteristic enthusiasm to improve his country's relations with Israel was motivated by his interest in mitigating America's pressure for democratization in the Middle East. Mubarak reasoned that opening up his regime will loosen his grip at home and may ultimately lead to the downfall of his regime. As a political commentator said, "the most likely

reason for Mubarak's behavior (towards Israel) is his personal quest for political survival…most Arab leaders have successfully evaded demands for change and democratization by demonstrating to their patrons in Washington how useful they can be in the "war on terrorism" and by showing their ability to maintain stability and calm in the Middle East."[237]

As Stephen Waltz explained, states ally (bandwagon) with or (balance) against threats, real or imagined. The American call for democratizing the Arab world was perceived negatively in Cairo since internal insecurity, in the words of Mohamed Ayoob, is "the defining characteristic of Third world states"[238]. The persistence efforts of George W. Bush to promote democratic rule in the Arab and Islamic worlds posed a serious threat to the Egyptian regime and propelled it to respond in self defense. Third world leaders occasionally protect themselves at the expense of the interests of their states, David argued. They favor decisions that would preserve their power - albeit harming the state - instead of decisions that would benefit the state but endanger their hold on power. The QIZ deal is a very good example of that; it harmed the state's political and economic interests, but safeguarded the regime.

Conclusions

Human beings - when necessary - make minor concessions in their private and professional lives. To cope with hard times, for example, one can accept a job of poorer quality and lower wage than anticipated or used to. Concessions are also made in all kinds of personal relations and all sorts of everyday situations. But when a man's life is threatened, he would certainly be ready to make more profound concessions to survive. The same logic applies to regimes. To cope with unfavorable economic or political conditions, regimes can give minor concessions to opponents – internal or external. But when their whole existence is threatened, they would certainly be ready to make more concessions in the quest for survival.

The main obsession of President Mubarak is to maintain his rule and protect his regime from internal and external threats. To avert post-9/11 US efforts to introduce political reforms to his regime that could weaken his control and his clout, Mubarak used various measures. First, some internal changes that resonate with Western conceptions of reform were introduced. For example, a national council for human rights and another for women were established by a governmental initiative and a wider margin of freedom of expression in the independent and official media was tolerated. The notorious state security courts and hard labor penalty were also

abolished. And to prove faithfulness to the notion of reform, an international conference was held under state auspices at the Alexandria Bibliotheca that issued a bold statement in support of reform. In February 2005, moreover, Mubarak ordered an amendment of constitution article number 76 that allows, for the first time, electing the president by a multi-candidate electoral process, although demands for constitutional reform were just a month earlier dismissed as "futile". Such moves were primarily aimed at assuaging foreign pressure. Instead of reform, the regime settled down for giving a mere impression of reform. As young politician Ayman Nour said, "(w)hen the government talks of reform, they are addressing foreign nations, and trying to fool the naïve"[239].

But domestic measures were not enough to contain the threat. Foreign policy was therefore employed as well to improve Egypt's deteriorating relationship with Washington and reduce the burden of its pressure. The golden gate of Israel was crossed to re-acquire the lost status in Washington. In 2005, moreover, further foreign policy concessions were given to the American administration to secure a decline in the latter's unwanted demands. On a visit by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to Cairo, a deal was reportedly struck; Cairo pledged to coordinate with Sharon in his withdrawal plan from Gaza and to support the political process in Iraq in exchange for a freeze on the American campaign against Egypt. In short, the Egyptian regime, as a professor of Political Science and activist said, "traded on its political assets and its importance to regional peace to dodge reform."[240]

Appendix

TABLE 1

U.S. ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO EGYPT (1982-1988)

(OBLIGATIONS $000)

Fiscal Year	Projects	Commodity Import Program	Cash Transfer	Public Law 480	Total
1982	350,460	418,000	0	290,848	1,059,308
1983	342,847	298,992	0	257,542	899,381
1984	459,733	295,982	101,894	264,461	1,122,070
1985	466,610	218,019	350,000	236,248	1,270,877
1986	494,582	205,535	360,055	218,544	1,278,716
1987	484,891	205,953	115,000	171,025	976,869
1988	510,729	194,007	0	170,995	875,731
Total	3,109,852	1,836,488	926,949	1,609,663	7,482,952

Source: Mona Omran ElShafei, *Patron and Client: Egypt's Pursuit of an Independent Foreign Policy in the Context of its Special Relationship with the United States, From 1982 to 1988* (Cairo: M.A. Thesis, The American University in Cairo, 1990).

TABLE 2

TOTAL U.S. FOREIGN AID TO EGYPT (1979-1997)

Aid Type	1979	1981	1983	1985	1987	1989	1991	1993	1995	1997
Military	1500	550	1325	1175	1300	1300	1300	1300	1300	1300
Economic	835	829	750	1315	815	815	780	747	1113	815
Food	253	301	255	227	196	152	218	4	0	0

Total	2588	1680	2330	2717	2311	2267	2298	2057	2413	2115

Source: Bessma Momani, "Promoting Economic Liberalization in Egypt: From U.S. Foreign Aid to Trade and Investment," *MERIA* 7, no. 3 (September 2003): http://meria.idc.ac.il/journal/2003/issue3/jv7n3a6.html.

TABLE 3

PERCENTAGE OF U.S. AID TO EGYPT TO TOTAL FOREIGN AID (1981-1991)

Year	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	Average
%	85.3	72.2	68.3	65.2	72.7	75.8	56.3	65.3	55.6	19.7	19	59.3

Source: Zeinab Abdel-Azim Mohamed, *Egyptian Policy towards the United States, 1981-1991* (Beirut: Center of Arab Unity Studies, 1997), 117.

TABLE 4

PERCENTAGE OF EGYPT'S IMPORTS FROM MAJOR TRADING PARTNERS TO TOTAL IMPORTS (1981-1991)

Country	United States	West Germany	France	Italy	Japan
1981	19.6	10.2	9.4	7.4	4.3
1982	19	9.9	7.5	7.6	4.5
1983	16.1	10.6	6.9	8	5.6
1984	11.4	10.2	7.8	8.5	6.3
1985	13	9.6	7	7.6	5.2
1986	15.3	11.2	6.7	6.9	5.4
1987	14.3	11	8.1	7.2	6.7

1988	11.9	9.7	8.5	7	5
1989	17.6	1.2	9	10	5.1
1990	14.1	1.2	9.3	6.5	3.7
1991	16.1	11.2	6.9	6.8	4.1
Average	15.3	9.5	7.9	7.6	5.1

Source: Zeinab Abdel-Azim Mohamed, *Egyptian Policy towards the United States, 1981-1991* (Beirut: Center of Arab Unity Studies, 1997), 87.

TABLE 5

PERCENTAGE OF EGYPT'S EXPORTS TO MAJOR TRADING PARTNERS TO TOTAL EXPORTS (1981-1991)

Country	Italy	Soviet Union	France	United States	Netherlands
1981	25.6	4.1	3.2	3.8	4.1
1982	22.1	4.3	6.9	4.7	5.4
1983	18.1	7.1	9.4	6.6	4.0
1984	17.2	5.3	6.6	5.5	5.2
1985	17.7	4.8	11.6	0.9	4.1
1986	14.1	5.8	3.8	2.9	4.9
1987	14.3	13.9	5.1	7.9	6.1
1988	10.8	12.2	5.8	6.3	6.9
1989	13.8	13.3	7.1	5.0	5.7
1990	12.2	15.8	4.0	8.6	6.3
1991	14.8	6.3	5.9	7.6	3.8
Average	16.4	8.4	6.3	5.4	5.1

Source: Zeinab Abdel-Azim Mohamed, *Egyptian Policy towards the United States, 1981-1991* (Beirut: Center of Arab Unity Studies, 1997), 85.

TABLE 6

PERCENTAGE OF EGYPTIAN EXPORTS AND IMPORTS TO THE U.S. TO TOTAL EXPORTS AND IMPORTS (1981-1991)

Year	Exports	Imports
1981	3.82	19.65
1982	4.73	19.02
1983	6.60	16.13
1984	5.55	11.39
1985	0.91	12.98
1986	2.9	15.29
1987	7.89	14.3
1988	6.28	11.92
1989	5.04	17.63
1990	8.58	14.1
1991	7.6	16.09
Average	5.45	15.3

Source: Zeinab Abdel-Azim Mohamed, *Egyptian Policy towards the United States, 1981-1991* (Beirut: Center of Arab Unity Studies, 1997), 90.

TABLE 7

PERCENTAGE OF EGYPTIAN EXPORTS TO U.S. TO EGYPTIAN IMPORTS FROM U.S. (1981-1991)

Year	Percentage
1981	7.11
1982	8.54
1983	12.81

1984	14.2
1985	2.61
1986	4.91
1987	14.73
1988	12.9
1989	9.86
1990	17.03
1991	22.05
Average	11.5

Source: Zeinab Abdel-Azim Mohamed, *Egyptian Policy towards the United States, 1981-1991* (Beirut: Center of Arab Unity Studies, 1997), 91.

TABLE 8

PERCENTAGE OF AMERICAN INVESTMENTS IN OIL SECTOR TO TOTAL INVESTMENTS IN OIL SECTOR (1981-1991)

Year	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	Average
%	30.1	30.2	27.7	28.8	31.7	26.5	24	28.1	30.1	33.9	32.3	29.4

Source: Zeinab Abdel-Azim Mohamed, *Egyptian Policy towards the United States, 1981-1991* (Beirut: Center of Arab Unity Studies, 1997), 128.

TABLE 9

PERCENTAGE OF AMERICAN INVESTMENTS IN OIL SECTOR TO TOTAL FOREIGN INVESTMENTS IN OIL SECTOR (1981-1991)

Year	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	Average

%	44.7	44.8	41.1	44.6	49.6	42.9	40.1	42.5	41.8	42.4	39	43

Source: Zeinab Abdel-Azim Mohamed, *Egyptian Policy towards the United States, 1981-1991* (Beirut: Center of Arab Unity Studies, 1997), 128.

[1]John Waterbury, "The Implications of *Infitah* for U.S.-Egyptian Relations," in *The Middle East and the United States: Perceptions and Policies*, Ed. Haim Shaked and Itamar Rabinovich (New Jersey: New Brunswick, 1980), 349.

[2]For more information on the secret channel of communication established between Sadat's advisor and Kissinger, see Mohamed Hassanein Heikal, *October 73: Arms and Politics* (Cairo: Al-Ahram Center for Translation and Publishing, 1993).

[3]William Quandt, *The United States and Egypt: An Essay on Policy for the 1990s* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 1990), 16.

[4]Shimon Shamir, "Egypt's Reorientation towards the U.S.—Factors and Conditions of Decision Making," in *The Middle East and the United States: Perceptions and Policies*, ed. Haim Shaked and Itamar Rabinovich (New Jersey: New Brunswick, 1980), 282.

[5]Ali E. Hillal Dessouki and Bahgat Korany, "The Global System and Arab Foreign Policies: The Primacy of Constraints," in *The Foreign Policies of Arab States*, ed. Bahgat Korany and Ali E. Hillal Dessouki (Cairo: AUC Press, 1984), 129.

[6]Waterbury, "The Implications of *Infitah* for U.S.-Egyptian Relations", 348.

[7]Shamir, "Egypt's Reorientation towards the U.S.", 278.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Quandt, *The United States and Egypt*, 2.

[10]Shamir, "Egypt's Reorientation towards the U.S.", 281.

[11]Walid Kazziha, *Palestine in the Arab Dilemma* (London: Croom Helm, 1979), 87.

[12]Ibid., p. 92.

[13]Anwar El-Sadat, *In Search of Identity* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), 222.

[14]Stephen Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 1987), 3.

[15]A study on pivotal states in the developing world and their significance to the post-Cold War U.S. foreign policy was conducted by Robert Chase, Emily Hill and Paul Kennedy in the late 1990s. The "pivotal states" project selected nine states, including Egypt, following the supposition that the future of any of these states affects the success (or failure) of its region. According to the editors, "pivotal states have the potential to work a significant beneficial or harmful effect on their regions…if a pivotal state grows smoothly and equitably, its success would nurture other states in the region. Conversely, chaos in a pivotal state…would generate transboundary mayhem in the form of severed trade links, increased migration, communal violence, pollution, disease, and so on." (Robert Chase, Emily Hill, and Paul Kennedy, "Introduction," in *The Pivotal States: A Framework for US Policy in the Developing World*, ed. Robert Chase, Emily Hill and Paul Kennedy (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1998), 7)

[16]Mona Omran Elshafei, *Patron and Client: Egypt's Pursuit of an Independent Foreign Policy in the Context of its Special Relationship with the United States, From 1982 to 1988* (Cairo: M.A. Thesis, The American University in Cairo, 1990), 140.

[17]Ali E. Hillal Dessouki, "The Primacy of Economics: The Foreign Policy of Egypt," in *The Foreign Policies of Arab States: The Challenge of Change*, ed. Bahgat Korany and Ali E. Hillal Dessouki (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), 175.

[18]Quandt, *The United States and Egypt*, 74.

[19]Raymond Hinnebusch, "The Foreign Policy of Egypt," in *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States*, ed. Raymond Hinnebusch and Anoushiravan Ehteshami (Boulder & London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002), 106.

[20]William Quandt, "American-Egyptian Relations," *American-Arab Affairs* 22, no. 3 (Fall 1987): 6.

[21]The famous statement attributed to Henry Kissinger implies at first sight equality between Egypt and Syria, but that is not true. In fact, the quote emphasizes the differences between the roles Cairo and Damascus can play in regional politics. Egypt, by virtue of having the largest population in the Arab world, the strongest army and an undisputed cultural appeal, can take the initiative and fight. Not only that, but no war can ever be initiated without its participation. Syria's role, on the other hand, is relegated to that of making peace imperfect if excluded. Kissinger, therefore, rightly implies that peace between, for example, Jordan, Lebanon or even the PLO with Israel would remain incomplete unless Syria joins. Hence, the statement provides a description of the hierarchy of power in the region; Egypt comes first, then Syria then the rest of Arabs.

[22]Quandt, "American-Egyptian Relations": 2.

[23]"The United States and Egypt – How Allied? A Debate," *Middle East Quarterly* VII, no. 4 (December 2000): http://www.meforum.org/article/48.

[24]Quandt, *The United States and Egypt*, 17.

[25]Hermann Frederick Eilts, "The United States and Egypt," in *The Middle East: Ten Years after Camp David*, ed. William Quandt (Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1988), 112.

[26]Quandt, "American-Egyptian Relations": 4.

[27]For a review of the aspects of Cairo's behavior that drive it apart from American policies, see Steven Cook, "Egypt – Still America's Partner?," *Middle East Quarterly* VII, no. 2 (June 2000): http://www.meforum.org/article/58; Kenneth Pollack, "The United States and Egypt: Stress and Distress," *Policy Watch* no. 232 (16 January 1997): http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC05.php?CID=1111.

[28]Mona Omran ElShafei, *Patron and Client*, 139. For a detailed study on the voting patterns of Egypt in the United Nations and its degree of compliance with those of the United States in the period from 1981-1991, see Zeinab Abdel-Azim Mohamed, *Egyptian Policy towards the United States, 1981-1991* (Beirut: Center of Arab Unity Studies, 1997), 135-147.

[29]Jon Alterman, "The United States and Egypt: Building the Partnership," *Middle East Note* (produced by the Center for Strategic and International Studies) (August 2003).

[30]Duncan Clarke, "US Security Assistance to Egypt and Israel: Politically Untouchable?," *Middle East Journal* 51, no. 2 (Spring 1997): 210-211.

[31]Ahmed Ismail Fakhr, "The Future of the U.S.-Egyptian Partnership," in *Egypt at the Crossroads: Dometic Stability and Regional Role*, ed. Phebe Marr (Hawaii: University Press of the Pacific, 2005), 226.

[32]Abdel Moneim Said and Robert Pelletreau, "U.S.-Egyptian Relations," *Middle East Policy* VIII, no. 2 (June 2001): 45.

[33]Eilts, "The United States and Egypt", 149.

[34]"The United States and Egypt – How Allied? A Debate".

[35]Quandt, *The United States and Egypt*, 2-3.

[36]Thanaa Fouad Abdallah, "Egyptian-American Relations: Between Cooperation and Alliance," *Al-Mustaqbal Al-Arabi* 23, no. 262 (December 2000): 30.

[37]Ibrahim Ibrahim, "Egypt, Israel and the Palestinians," in *The Political Economy of Contemporary Egypt*, ed. Ibrahim Oweiss (Washington, DC: Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, Georgetown University, 1990), 302.

[38]Shamir, "Egypt's Reorientation towards the U.S.", 276.

[39]Dessouki, "The Primacy of Economics: The Foreign Policy of Egypt", 175.

[40]Marvin Weinbaum, "Dependent Development and U.S. Economic Aid to Egypt," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 18, no. 2 (May 1986): 120.

[41]Ibid., 132.

[42]Nadia Abou El-Magd, "Storm in a Teacup? Storm in a Teacup?," *Al-Ahram Weekly*, 10 August 2000, http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2000/494/eg5.htm. Hillal's opinion is reminiscent of a similar description made by a pre-revolutionary politician, Amin Osman. In the 1940s, Osman used the catholic marriage analogy to depict the then edgy Egyptian-British relations. His shocking statement extremely angered the Egyptian public and triggered his assassination by a group of nationalists (including the young officer Anwar Sadat). Interestingly, Hillal disappeared in 2003 and neither he nor his body ever appeared. His disappearance remains a mystery up till this day.

[43]Galal Amin, *The Globalization of Suppression: The United States, Arabs and Muslims Before and After the Events of September 2001* (Cairo: Dar Al-Shorooq, 2002), 23-37.

[44]Louis Cantori, "Egyptian Policy Under Mubarak: The Politics of Continuity and Change," in *The Middle East After the Israeli Invasion of Lebanon*, ed. Robert Freedman (Syracuse: Syracuse UP, 1986), 337.

[45]Ibid., 328-9.

[46]Said and Pelletreau, "U.S.-Egyptian Relations", 50.

[47]Hassan Abu Talib, *Arab Strategic Report, 2001* (Cairo: Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, 2002), 404.

[48]After the Luxor massacre, Mubarak angrily attacked European countries who have granted political asylum to Egyptian criminals: "I believe that if the world had cooperated against terrorism, the Luxor strike would not have happened. The terrorists have protection in Britain and other European countries, while they commit their crimes, collect money, and plan with the Afghani elements, who are all killers." (Fawaz Gerges, *America and Political Islam: Clash of Cultures or Clash of Interests*? (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999), 175.)

[49]Abdallah, "Egyptian-American Relations: Between Cooperation and Alliance", 43.

[50]Abu Talib, *Arab Strategic Report, 2001*, 409; David Satterfield, "U.S.-Egyptian Relations," Capitol Hill Hearing Testimony, Committee: House International Relations, Subcommittee: Middle East and Central Asia, 16 June 2004.

[51]Abu Talib, *Arab Strategic Report, 2001*, 412.

[52]Hannah Allam, "Testy Exchanges Show Strains in U.S.-Egypt Relationship," *Knight Ridder*, 22 May 2006.

[53]Katharine Mascardelli, "The Revival of Islam: A threat to U.S.-Egyptian Relations?," Paper Presented at the Conference of Defence Associations Symposium on Security and Defence, November 2002.

[54]Said and Pelletreau, "U.S.-Egyptian Relations", 49. A declassified State Department Report revealed the importance of Egypt's provision of transit rights:

"We rely on Egyptian cooperation in providing quick transit of Egyptian airspace and through the Suez Canal. The U.S. military routinely conducts 6-8 transits of the Suez Canal and some 500 military overflights of Egypt each month." (Bessma Momani, "Promoting Economic Liberalization in Egypt: From U.S. Foreign Aid to Trade and Investment," *MERIA* 7, no. 3 (September 2003): http://meria.idc.ac.il/journal/2003/issue3/jv7n3a6.html.

[55]"The United States and Egypt – How Allied? A Debate"

[56]Samuel Spector, "Washington and Cairo – Near the Breaking Point?," *Middle East Quarterly* XII, no. 3 (Summer 2005): http://www.meforum.org/article/740.

[57]Chas Freeman, "U.S.-Egyptian Defense Relations," in *Egypt at the Crossroads: Domestic Stability and Regional Role*, ed. Phebe Marr (Hawaii, University Press of the Pacific, 1999), 205.

[58]For a detailed review of the Ras Banas affair, check ElShafei, *Patron and Client*, 106-116.

[59]Ibid., 112.

[60]Bard Mitchell, "How Fares the Camp David Trio?," *Orbis* 34, no. 2 (Spring 1990).

[61]Freeman, "U.S.-Egyptian Defense Relations", 207.

[62]"The United States and Egypt – How Allied? A Debate"

[63]Dessouki, "The Primacy of Economics: The Foreign Policy of Egypt", 178.

[64]Quandt, *The United States and Egypt*, 2.

[65]Clarke, "US Security Assistance to Egypt and Israel: Politically Untouchable?", 202.

[66]The Islamic threat to the stability of the Egyptian regime loomed high in the minds of policy-makers in Washington. According to a White House Press Release, "it is only through moving forward on the economic/social agenda that one is able…to undercut the ability of these Islamic extremists to undermine the political process, and quite frankly, come to power." (Momani, "Promoting Economic Liberalization in Egypt")

[67]Quandt, *The United States and Egypt*, 73.

[68]Public Law 480 started in 1959 and worked regularly till 1964 when it was stopped against the backdrop of heightening tension in Nasser's relationship with President Lyndon Johnson.

[69]Weinbaum, "Dependent Development and U.S. Economic Aid to Egypt", 119.

[70]A.K. Banerji, "Egypt under Mubarak," *Roundtable* (January 1991).

[71]Spector, "Washington and Cairo – Near the Breaking Point?"

[72]Mohamed, *Egyptian Policy towards the United States*, 85 & 87.

[73]Ibid., 90.

[74]Abdallah, "Egyptian-American Relations: between Cooperation and Alliance", 32.

[75]Mohamed, *Egyptian Policy towards the United States*, 93-4.

[76]Abdallah, "Egyptian-American Relations: Between Cooperation and Alliance", 32.

[77]Amr Gamal, "Walking Tall," *Business Today Egypt*, 15 June 2005, http://www.businesstodayegypt.com/article.aspx?ArticleID=5275.

[78]Abdallah, "Egyptian-American Relations: Between Cooperation and Alliance.", 33.

[79]Weinbaum, "Dependent Development and U.S. Economic Aid to Egypt", 126.

[80]Hussein Abdel-Raziq, "How Does Cairo Deal with Washington? Towards an Egyptian Initiative to Correct the Defect of the Relationship with America," *Al-Hayat*, 9 February 2001, 10.

[81]Emad Gad, interview by author, 24 October 2004, Cairo, tape recording, Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, Cairo.

[82]Abdel Monem Said, "Continuity and Change in Egyptian Policy," *Al-Ahram*, 10 June 2003, http://www.ahram.org.eg/archive/Index.asp?CurFN=FILE3.HTM&DID=7782.

[83]Clarke, "US Security Assistance to Egypt and Israel", 211.

[84]Fouad Ajami, "The Sorrows of Egypt," *Foreign Affairs* (September / October 1995): http://www.foreignaffairs.org/19950901faessay5066/fouad-ajami/the-sorrows-of-egypt-a-tale-of-two-men.html?mode=print.

[85]Stein argues that the precedents for cold peace were set before Sadat's assassination in 1981. He points out to a report published by the daily *Yediot Aharonot* in March 1980 which refers to a secret document allegedly emanating from the Egyptian Foreign Ministry that instructs Egyptian officials to keep normalization at a low level. In the same year, a report of the Israeli Foreign Ministry claimed that there was "an Egyptian tendency, particularly at the sub-

presidential level, [to] deliberately slow down progress and the rate of normalization, and that progress could have been more substantial had the Egyptians been more forthcoming." (Kenneth W. Stein, "Continuity and Change in Egyptian-Israeli Relations, 1973-97," *Israel Affairs* 3 (Spring/Summer 1997): 304; Kenneth W. Stein, "Egyptian-Israeli Relations," *MERIA* 1, no. 3 (September 1997): http://meria.idc.ac.il/journal/1997/issue3/jv1n3a5.html.)

[86]Taba is one-square kilometer, claimed by Egypt and Israel. Upon finishing its withdrawal from the Sinai Peninsula in April 1982, Egypt figured out that Israel did not pull out from it. In 1986, both parties agreed on the principle of arbitration and in 1988 the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruled in favor of Egypt.

[87]Whereas Egypt has been regularly attacked by Israel's officials and press for dragging its foot when it comes to developing bilateral relations, some Israelis admitted that Israel's actions are responsible for Egypt's freeze of normalization. In 1984, Ezer Weizman said: "We didn't take the autonomy issue seriously, we said 'no more war' and went ahead and made war; we went into Lebanon…and we killed and bombed—and then we have the effrontery to complain that Egypt is returning to the Arab world." (Ann Mosely Lesch, "Egyptian-Israeli Relations: Normalization or Special Ties?," in *Israel, Egypt and the Palestinians: From Camp David to Intifada*, ed. Ann Mosely Lesch and Mark Tessler (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana UP, 1989), 82)

[88]Mitchell, "How Fares the Camp David Trio?"

[89]Stein, "Continuity and Change in Egyptian-Israeli Relations", 307.

[90]In three different interviews (conducted in April 1992, March 1994 and January 1995), Mubarak confirmed that pragmatism motivates his country's relationship with Israel (Stein, "Egyptian-Israeli Relations").

[91]Stein, "Continuity and Change in Egyptian-Israeli Relations", 310.

[92]Dessouki argues that "the most striking achievement of the [Camp David] Accords is their endurance and stability." (Ali E. Hillal Dessouki, "Egyptian Foreign Policy since Camp David," in *The Middle East: Ten Years After Camp David*, ed. William Quandt (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1988), 95)

[93]Stein, "Continuity and Change in Egyptian-Israeli Relations", 305.

[94]Shawn Pine, "Myopic Vision: Whither Israeli-Egyptian Relations?," *Israel Affairs* 3 (Spring/Summer 1997): 323.

[95]Saad Eddin Ibrahim, "Domestic Developments in Egypt," in *The Middle East: Ten Years After Camp David*, ed. William Quandt (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1988), 31.

[96]Lesch, "Egyptian-Israeli Relations: Normalization or Special Ties?", 75.

[97]Ibid., 69-70.

[98]Ibid., 65.

[99]The only joint committee that "was taken seriously by the Egyptians and functioned – whatever the political situation - as efficiently as a Swiss watch" was the joint military committee. It is concerned with issues of a military nature, such as monitoring borders and making sure no infringements on any country's sovereignty takes place, a clear indication that the Egyptian government has a clear interest in respecting the military annex of the Camp David Accords (Ephraim Dowek, *Israeli-Egyptian Relations, 1980-2000* (London: Frank Cass, 2001), 250).

[100]David Bar-illan, "Egypt Against Israel," *Commentary* 100, no. 3 (September 1995). Available from Academic Search Elite.

[101]Stein, "Egyptian-Israeli Relations".

[102]Dowek, *Israeli-Egyptian Relations*, 126.

[103]Ibrahim, "Egypt, Israel and the Palestinians", 300.

[104]Mohamed Sid-Ahmed, "On Egyptian-American Relations," *Al-Ahram Weekly*, 14 June 2001, http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2001/538/op3.htm.

[105]Fawaz Gerges, "Egyptian-Israeli Relations Turn Sour," *Foreign Affairs* (May 1995). Available from LexisNexis.

[106]Plenty of Egypt's thinkers and writers continued to believe that Israel's real intentions did not undergo any change in the peace phase and that regional domination remains – albeit the sweet talk - its ultimate goal. In April 1994, Al-Wafd newspaper presented this argument:

"What it [Israel] has failed to achieve by war it will achieve by peace. A Zionist empire will spring up between the Nile and the Euphrates, one in which the mighty Zionists will be masters and the inept, misguided, and dysfunctional Arabs the underdogs." (Daniel Pipes, *The Hidden Hand: Middle East Fears of Conspiracy* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), 66) In the same year, a poll showed that 17% of Egyptians thought that disavowing the Israeli 'from the Nile to the Euphrates' dream is a prerequisite for regional cooperation. (Ibid., 68)

[107]Mohamed Sid-Ahmed, "Imaging Tomorrow (4): Creativity – on Heikal's Terms," *Al-Ahram Weekly*,16 March 2000, http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2000/473/op3.htm.

[108]Gerges, "Egyptian-Israeli Relations Turn Sour."

[109]Ibid.

[110]Stein, "Continuity and Change in Egyptian-Israeli Relations", 314.

[111]Hassan Nafaa, "Prepared for Peace, Ready for War," *Al-Ahram Weekly*, 11 April 2002, http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2002/581/op10.htm.

[112]Dowek, *Israeli-Egyptian Relations*, 298.

[113]On a visit to Cairo during the peak of the diplomatic crisis, U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright told her Egyptian hosts that the United States would not mind if the Egyptian government took an independent position by refraining from signing for the extension of the NPT treaty, on one condition: that it does not mobilize other states to follow suit. If Egypt acquiesces to this request, she added, Egyptian-American relations would not get affected by the showdown and no sanctions of any sort would be imposed. (Hassan Abu-Taleb, interview by author, 26 October 2004, Cairo, tape recording, Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, Cairo; Mustafa Al-Sayed, interview by author, 11 January 2005, Cairo, tape recording, The American University in Cairo, Cairo.)

[114]For more on the NPT standoff, see Bar-illan, "Egypt Against Israel"; Gerges, "Egyptian-Israeli Relations Turn Sour."; Adel Safty, "Balance of Power and Nuclear Deterrence: The Middle East After the Gulf War," in *The International Relations of the Middle East in the 21st Century*, ed. Tareq Ismael (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2000).

[115]Stein, "Continuity and Change in Egyptian-Israeli Relations", 312.

[116]Ibid.

[117]Ibid.

[118]Bar-illan, "Egypt Against Israel".

[119]Derek Brown, "Bloodshed and Desperation in Israel," *The Guardian*, 18 April 2001, http://www.guardian.co.uk/?Print/0,3858,4171936,00.html.

[120]Louis Cantori, "Egypt at the Crossroads: Domestic, Economic and Political Stagnation and Foreign Policy Constraints," in *The Middle East and the Peace Process: The Impact of the Oslo Accords*, ed. Robert O. Freedman (Florida: University Press of Florids, 1998), 162.

[121]"Not a Popularity Contest," *Al-Ahram Weekly*, 17 May 2001, http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2001/534/eg41.htm.

[122]Quandt, "American-Egyptian Relations", 1; Quandt, *The United States and Egypt*, 8.

[123]Quandt, "American-Egyptian Relations", 1.

[124]Quandt, *The United States and Egypt*, 9.

[125]Quandt, "American-Egyptian Relations", 8-9.

[126]ElShafei, *Patron and Client*, 102.

[127]Ibid., 103.

[128]In *The New York Times*, Thomas Friedman wrote that there was a profusion of annoyance with Egypt in Washington's senior policy-making circles for its opposition to be of greater help during the Camp David talks (see Thomas Friedman, "The Egypt Game," *The New York Times*, 1 August 2000.

[129]Said and Pelletreau, "U.S.-Egyptian Relations", 53.

[130]Martin Indyk, "Back to the Bazaar," *Foreign Affairs* (January/February 2002): http://www.brookings.edu/articles/2002/0101middleeast_indyk.aspx.

[131]Joseph Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), 119.

[132]Ibid.

[133]Indyk, "Back to the Bazaar".

[134]Nonna Gorilovskaya, "Denial in Egypt," *MotherJones.com*, 14 April 2004, http://motherjones.com/news/dailymojo/2004/04/04_520.html.

[135]Indyk, "Back to the Bazaar".

[136]Ibid.

[137]Ibid.

[138]Neo-cons are a group that emerged in the 1960s as a faction that seceded from the Democratic Party and had distinct views on domestic social policy and foreign policy. However, the second generation that appeared in the 1980s is different; foreign policy is their chief center of attention. They mostly come from quite similar backgrounds, whether professors, lawyers, or writers. They are members in the same think tanks; they write for the same publications; and they co-author the same books. In short, they are "Washington talkers and intellectuals." ("The Shadow Men," *The Economist*, 26 April 2003.) Extremely vigorous, well-organized and well-placed in the system, the network of neo-cons became one of the main cliques influencing President Bush's foreign policy. For an excellent source on the origins, doctrine and impact of neo-cons under George W. Bush see Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone: The Neo-Conservatives and the Global Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

[139]Rahul Mahajan, *Full Spectrum Dominance: US Power in Iraq and Beyond* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2003), 50.

[140]Max Boot, "Think Again: Neocons," *Foreign Policy* no. 140 (January/February 2004).

[141]Nye, *Soft Power*, 139-140.

[142]Boot, "Think Again: Neocons".

[143]The trouble in Egyptian-American relations started, as a matter of fact, in the second term of Clinton's presidency. Many in U.S. policy circles began to feel that the American administration was "too lenient" with Egypt, and a basic reassessment of the different components of the relationship was expected to take place anyway. (Pollack, "The United States and Egypt: Stress and Distress").

[144]Daniel Williams, "Egyptians Wonder if Dynasty is Near," *The Washington Post*, 24 September 2004, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A45660-2004Sep23.html.

[145]Quoted in Christopher Dickey, "Egypt: Key to the Mideast," *Newsweek (International Edition)*, 21 June 2004, http://msnbc.com/id/5197854/site/newsweek.

[146]Ibid.

[147]Quoted in "Mubarak Leads Opposition to Bush Initiative," *Dawn*, 26 February 2004, http://www.dawn.com/2004/02/27/int6.htm.

[148]Ibid.

[149]Dickey, "Egypt: Key to the Mideast".

[150]Quoted in Gorilovskaya, "Denial in Egypt".

[151]David Remnick, "Going Nowhere: In Mubarak's Egypt, Democracy is an Idea Whose Time Has Not Yet Come," *New Yorker*, 12 & 19 July 2004, http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2004/07/12/040712fa_fact1.

[152]Ibid.

[153]Ibid.

[154]Quoted in Michele Dunne, "The United States and Political Reform in Egypt: A New Era," *Arab Reform Journal* (May 2004): http://www.mafhoum.com/press7/194S23.htm.

[155]Ibid.

[156]Ibid.

[157]"Remarks at the American University in Cairo," Website of US Department of State, http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2005/48328.htm

[158]"Growing Egyptian-U.S. Tensions: Egyptian Press Attacks President Bush," *MEMRI (Special Dispatch Series)* no. 881 (18 March 2005): http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=countries&Area=egypt&ID=SP88105.

[159]Ibid.

[160]Abdel Monem Said, "A Case of Histrionics," *Al-Ahram Weekly*, 17 August 2000, http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2000/495/op2.htm.

[161]Abou El-Magd, "Storm in a Teacup? Storm in a Teacup?"

[162]Dickey, "Egypt: Key to the Mideast".

[163]Ibid.

[164]"Our American Friend 'Edward S. Walker Jr.'s Visit to the Middle East (Part II)" *MEMRI (Inquiry and Analysis Series)* no. 79 (22 November 2001): http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archives&Area=ia&ID=IA7901.

[165]Fareed Zakaria, "The Good, the Bad, the Ugly," *Newsweek*, 31 May 2004.

[166]Saad Eddin Ibrahim, "Uniting Against Tyranny-as-Usual on the Nile," *The Daily Star*, 3 March 2005.

[167]Gamal Zaida argues that the amount of foreign pressure exerted for reform exceeds that of any other time in the last fifty years. In the modern history of Egypt, it is only surpassed by the imperialist intervention of the late nineteenth century. (Gamal Zaida, "The Talk of Reform and Egyptian Foreign Policy," *Al-Ahram*, 22 June 2004, http://www.ahram.org.eg/archive/Index.asp?CurFN=file1.htm&DID=8160.)

[168]Kareem Kamel, "Egypt and Israel: From Cold Peace to Warm Embrace," *Islamonline*, 15 December 2004, http://www.islamonline.net/servlet/Satellite?c=Article_C&cid=1156077717303&pagename=Zone-English-Muslim_Affairs%2FMAELayout.

[169]Ben Fishman, "Analyzing the Thaw in Egyptian-Israeli Relations," *Policy Watch* no. 931 (20 December 2004): http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC05.php?CID=2208.

[170]Ibid.

[171]Ibid.

[172]Ibid.

[173]"Mubarak: Sharon Knows Nothing but Killing and War, No Solution with Him," *Al-Ahram*, 19 July 2001, http://www.ahram.org.eg/archive/Index.asp?CurFN=FRON1.HTM&DID=7091.

[174]Ibid.

[175]Hadia Mostafa, "Stitches in Time," *Egypt Today*, January 2005, 34.

[176]"Keynote Speech to 2004 Herzliya Conference by FM Silvan Shalom," *Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Government/Speeches+by+Israeli+leaders/2004/Summary+of+Lecture+to+2004+Herzliya+Conference+by+FM+Silvan+Shalom+15-Dec-2004.htm

[177]"Abu El-Gheit: Hamas Recognizes Israel and Arabs Want Normalization," *Al-Quds Al-Arabi*, 10 July 2005.

[178]Paul Schemm, "Bread and Butter," *Bitterlemons-international*, 13 January 2005, http://www.bitterlemons-international.org/previous.php?opt=1&id=68#279.

[179]Ben Kaspit, "Significant Thaw in Israeli-Egyptian Relations," *Maariv International*, 7 December 2004.

[180]Abdel-Wahab Badrakhan, "The QIZ Phase," *Al-Hayat*, 16 December 2004, http://www.daralhayat.com/opinion/12-2004/Item-20041215-d854ac2b-c0a8-10ed-001c-22ff0fce3e6d/story.html.

[181]Fahmy Howeidy, "Promoting Illusions and Adorning Risks," *Al-Ahram*, 14 December 2004, http://www.ahram.org.eg/archive/Index.asp?CurFN=opin1.htm&DID=8335.

[182]Kamel, "Egypt and Israel: From Cold Peace to Warm Embrace".

[183]Vikash Yadav, "The Political Economy of the Egyptian-Israeli QIZ Trade Agreement," *MERIA* 11, no. 1 (March 2007): 75.

[184]Mostafa, "Stitches in Time", 34.

[185]Smadar Perry, "Pulling Strings Discreetly," *Bitterlemons-international*, 13 January 2005, http://www.tharwaproject.org/node/156#Pulling_strings_discreetly.

[186]Paul Schemm, "An Abrupt Reconciliation that Made Good Business Sense," *The Daily Star*, 22 January 2005.

[187]Schemm, "Bread and Butter".

[188]Mahmud Bakry, "An Economic Camp David: The QIZ Aborts the Arab Market and Revitalizes the Middle Eastern Market," *El-Osboa*, 20 December 2004, http://www.elosboa.com/elosboa/issues/405/0700.asp.

[189]Kamel, "Egypt and Israel: From Cold Peace to Warm Embrace".

[190]Niveen Wahish, "Enter QIZ," *Al-Ahram Weekly*, 16 December 2004, http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2004/721/ec1.htm.

[191]Mahmud Awad, "Summarizing Egypt," *Al-Hayat*, 16 January 2005, http://www.daralhayat.com/opinion/01-2005/Item-20050115-774fad5c-c0a8-10ed-004e-5e7a84dddeb8/story.html.

[192]Hassan Nafaa, "Light at the End of the Tunnel? Or Just a Deceitful Illusion?," *Al-Hayat*, 15 December 2004, http://www.daralhayat.com/opinion/12-2004/20041214-15p11-02.txt/story.html.

[193]Sally Sami, "The QIZ: Is Egypt's "Demon" Becoming a Friend?," *Islamonline*, 1 January 2005, http://www.islamonline.net/servlet/Satellite?c=Article_C&cid=1156077718135&pagename=Zone-English-Muslim_Affairs%2FMAELayout.

[194]Andrew Tabler, "Struggling to Transform Aid to Trade," *Oxford Business Group*, http://impressions-ba.com/features.php?pageNum_Recordset1=32&totalRows_Recordset1=329&id_feature=10105

[195]Rehab El-Bakry, "Industries Eye QIZ Option," *Business Monthly*, December 2005, http://www.amcham.org.eg/Publications/BusinessMonthly/december%2005/indepth(industrieseysqizoption).asp; "QIZ and Tell," *Business Today Egypt*, December 2004, http://www.businesstodayegypt.com/article.aspx?ArticleID=2912.

[196]Wahish, "Enter QIZ".

[197]Gamal Essam El-Din, "NDP Rallies to Defend the QIZ," *Al-Ahram Weekly*, 23 December 2004, http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2004/722/eg2.htm.

[198]All semi-official Egyptian newspapers referred to the deal as an accord, not a protocol. Obviously, the reluctance to open discussion in the People's Assembly reflected concerns of heated discussions and criticisms that could embarrass the government and further mobilize the public against the deal.

[199]Badrakhan, "The QIZ Phase".

[200]Essam El-Din, "NDP Rallies to Defend the QIZ".

[201]Ibid.

[202]Due to the conservative nature of the majority of Egypt's populace, Egyptian leaders have all used religion to justify domestic and foreign policies. To avoid charges of communism, Nasser's regime, for example, tried to emphasize the social justice aspects of Islam. When Egypt changed its economic policies in the 1970s, the regime stressed Islam's permission of private ownership and trade. The most striking example of using Islam to defend a foreign policy decision, however, came in the aftermath of the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty. Islam became one of the main instruments of the regime in the battle of Camp David in the face of both: A public that was perplexed about the sudden move and opposition parties who were adamantly against it.

[203]Awad, "Summarizing Egypt".

[204]Sami, "The QIZ: Is Egypt's "Demon" Becoming a Friend?"

[205]Mostafa, "Stitches in Time", 35.

[206]Ten months after the deal was put into practice, an Egyptian state economist said that Israeli inputs (e.g. buttons, plastic handles…etc) are not made in Israel, but rather imported from China and then re-sold to Egyptian manufacturers at triple the international price causing great difficulty to the efforts of Egyptian exporters to enter the US market. (Mahmud Awad, "Israel: Our Middleman with America, and China Too," *Al-Hayat*, 23 October 2005, http://www.daralhayat.com/opinion/10-2005/Item-20051022-1974af29-c0a8-10ed-002d-80ae46194809/story.html; El-Bakry, "Industries Eye QIZ Option").

[207]Mustafa Al-Saeed, "The Qualified Zones (QIZ) Accord: Pros and Cons," *Al-Ahram*, 25 December 2004, http://www.ahram.org.eg/archive/Index.asp?CurFN=opin2.htm&DID=8346.

[208]Howeidy, "Promoting Illusions and Adorning Risks".

[209]Awad, "Summarizing Egypt".

[210]"The QIZ Treaty and Penetrating Arab Economies," *Almoslim*, 25 December 2005, http://www.almoslim.net/figh_wagi3/print_R.cfm?id=532.

[211]Magda Khidr, "Economic Experts Reject the QIZ," *Al-Araby*, 12 December 2004, http://www.al-araby.com/articles/938/041212-12-938-inv05.htm.

[212]Awad, "Summarizing Egypt".

[213]"The QIZ Treaty and Penetrating Arab Economies".

[214]Mahmud Awad, "The Winds of 'No-Deals'," *Al-Hayat*, 19 December 2004, http://www.daralhayat.com/opinion/12-2004/20041218-19P09-02.txt/story.html.

[215]By 2002, Jordanian textile exports had grown more than tenfold to exceed JD 300 million yearly. ("QIZ and Tell").

[216]Howeidy, "Promoting Illusions and Adorning Risks".

[217]Ahmed Al-Sayed Al-Naggar, "QIZ: The End of the Year Catastrophe," *Al-Araby*, 19 December 2004, http://www.al-araby.com/articles/939/041219-939-fct01.htm.

[218]Safaa Gamal-Eldin, "The QIZ Treaty between Opportunities and Dangers," *Al-Ahram Strategic File* (January 2005): http://acpss.ahram.org.eg/ahram/2001/1/1/FI1E46.HTM.

[219]Al-Naggar, "QIZ: The End of the Year Catastrophe".

[220]Ibid.

[221]Ibid.

[222]"Mubarak: I Face People with the Truth and Do My Best for Low-Income Brackets," Al-Ahram, 2 January 2004, http://www.ahram.org.eg/archive/Index.asp?CurFN=fron2.htm&DID=7988.

[223]Al-Naggar, "QIZ: The End of the Year Catastrophe".

[224]Yadav, "The Political Economy of the Egyptian-Israeli QIZ Trade Agreement", 81.

[225]Ibid., 84.

[226]Ibid., 79.

[227]Awad, "The Winds of 'No-Deals'".

[228]Mohamed Al-Saeed Idris, interview by author, July 2006, Cairo, tape recording, Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, Cairo.

[229]Ahmed Youssef Ahmed, interview by author, 27 May 2006, Cairo, tape recording, Institute of Arab Research and Studies, Cairo.

[230]Mohamed Al-Sayed Said, interview by author, 14 March 2006, Cairo, tape recording, Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, Cairo. Said argues that among the Egyptian bureaucracy, including the military bureaucracy, love of the United States is generally absent. "They might admire America, but, deep down, nobody loves her. They are fonder of Europe", he said.

[231]Jonathan Marcus, "Analysis: All Change for Washington Outlook?," *BBC*, 15 October 2004, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/3743446.stm.

[232]Abdel Monem Said, "Understanding the Egyptian Paradox," *Bitterlemons-international*, 13 January 2005, http://www.bitterlemons-international.org/inside.php?id=276.

[233]Perry, "Pulling Strings Discreetly".

[234]Said, "Understanding the Egyptian Paradox".

[235]Schemm, "An Abrupt Reconciliation that Made Good Business Sense".

[236]Yadav, "The Political Economy of the Egyptian-Israeli QIZ Trade Agreement", 79.

[237]Kamel, "Egypt and Israel: From Cold Peace to Warm Embrace".

[238]Mohamed Ayoob, *The Third World Security Predicament: State Making, Regional Conflict and the International System* (Boulder & London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1995), 16.

[239]Dan Murphy, "Egypt Keeps New Parties on Short Leash," *The Christian Science Monitor*, 21 October 2004, http://www.csmonitor.com/2004/1021/p06s02-wome.html.

[240]Mona Makram Ebeid, "Egypt and Reviving the Dying Embers of Political Reform," *The Daily Star*, 25 June 2004.

CHAPTER SIX
CONCLUSIONS

This study dealt with foreign policy-making in Egypt under President Mubarak. It started with a number of assumptions. First, insecurity is central in understanding the domestic and international behavior of Third World states. The multiplicity of sources of threats facing Third World states notwithstanding, the internal dimension is the component most accountable for feelings of insecurity since they threaten the leader's hold on power. Second, the traditional 'balance of power' model should be substituted with Walt's 'balance of threat' theory, according to which states ally with, or against, states that pose the greatest threats, rather than stronger states. Third, since Third World states are faced with a combination of internal and external threats, they most often tend to "omnibalance" between both sets. This takes shape by appeasing the outside threat while focusing their energies on the most urgent and threatening internal ones. However, low-level threats are balanced. In other words, the level of threat affects the type of state response. Fourth, when power is concentrated in the hands of the leader, as in most Third World countries, this leader turns out to be a crucial unit of analysis. The type of leadership and the idiosyncrasies of the leader must be identified and analyzed. Still, interests of the ruling coalition must be taken into consideration. Fifth, the choice of strategy depends on the availability of regional and international allies; the more allies, the higher the probability of balancing, the fewer allies the higher the probability of bandwagoning. This is a general tendency, but variations on it may issue from leadership idiosyncrasies and variations in a regime's social base.

These theories work their best if applied in a country whose political elite - or leader if power is centralized - is obsessed with its security. Egypt under Mubarak was a good candidate, therefore. Despite the array of organs involved in foreign policy decision-making in Egypt, the President remains, by far, the single most important actor in the process. State institutions like the Foreign Ministry, the Defense Ministry and the Intelligence are all subservient to the President and overt resistance to him is extremely rare, if not absent

altogether. Informal pressure groups on foreign policy are either non-existent or weak. Domestic constraints on the President's movement are lacking, moreover. Analyzing Egypt's foreign policy is therefore impossible without a deep understanding of the President, his worldviews, personality and attitudes.

The study of President Hosni Mubarak revealed a number of personal traits that were, directly or indirectly, mirrored in the substance and style of his policies. On top of these factors lies his cautiousness, an attribute that invoked a quiet policy which on one hand embraces diplomacy, negotiations and compromise, and on the other drifts away from military conflicts and diplomatic confrontations. Obsession with security, whether genuine or generated by life experiences, was also reflected in Mubarak's policies - domestic and foreign - leading to the triumph of the status-quo, an over reliance on the advice of security agencies and an instinct of clinging to power, sometimes at the expense of state interests. Naturally, an obvious side effect of these two factors is lethargy and hesitation. Other factors include his pragmatism and general freedom from the influence of any overriding ideology. This relieved him of one source of constraints that occasionally limited President Nasser's freedom of action. Mubarak is also known to be stubborn and resistant to alter views he had already formed. His mediocre political and economic background, furthermore, deprived Egypt's foreign policy of a clear blueprint of action and, to a significant degree, undermined its efficiency. Unlike Nasser and Sadat, Mubarak is not a charismatic leader who might be lured by the temptations of leadership to perform theatrical performances or take hero-like decisions. Accordingly, the preferences and wishes of his people figured less prominently in his calculations.

Two case studies were chosen to prove the validity of the aforementioned suppositions. The first focused on Egyptian-Iranian relations — a peculiar and bizarre example in Middle East politics, where formal diplomatic relations between two sizeable and strategic - geographically and politically - states in one region remained cut for more than twenty-five years, in spite of the political, strategic and economic lure promised by the resumption of relations.

I demonstrated that Egypt is the party responsible for the continuation of the break-up with Iran. The Iranian government, in line with its relentless attempts to break its regional and international isolation resulting from the first frantic years of the revolution, sought improving its relations with Cairo.

In the available literature on Egyptian-Iranian relations, many reasons were provided to explain Egypt's reluctance to establish full diplomatic relations with Iran. Most of them fail to present a convincing argument. The theory that maintains that the dispute between the United Arab Emirates and Iran over the three Persian Gulf islands overlooks the fact that the GCC countries – including the United Arab Emirates - enjoy friendly political, security and economic relations with Iran. Moreover, the UAE itself is Iran's largest Arab trading partner. In fact, rather than the UAE turning Egypt against Iran, it is Egypt that, at times, mobilized the UAE (and Gulf states) against Iran.

Furthermore, more than one Arab state has lingering land disputes with non-Arab states. The list includes Syria and Turkey, Morocco and Spain and Sudan and her neighbors. But Egypt's warm connections with the Turks and Spaniards never got tense because of these disputes. Moreover, Egypt did not boycott Israel, the Arab world's chief enemy, for its opposition to giving up Palestinian and Syrian land seized in 1967. In fact, concern about occupied Arab land would have caused Egypt and Iran to come closer not to drift apart. As a scholar of Iranian politics put it:

"The issue of the islands does not have any impact on Egypt's policy toward Iran. If this factor was of any importance, Egypt's position should have been very positive toward Iran, for its backing of Lebanon on the Shaba Farms issue, and its support of Syria's right in the Golan Heights and its overall uncompromising stance on the Arab-Israeli conflict."[1]

The argument that holds that Iran's opposition to the Arab-Israeli peace process is a worthwhile clue to the deterioration of Egyptian-Iranian relations is flawed too. It disregards two cloudless facts. The first is that Iran is a close ally of Syria and has cordial relations with Jordan. Both countries have endorsed the peace option and were engaged in direct peace negotiations with Israelis since, at least, the year 1991. The second is that the Islamic

republic's initial antagonistic stance towards the peace process has changed. Though sticking to its traditional hostile rhetoric towards Israel, Iran came to succumb to the notion that Arab states can pursue their interests in a different way from hers, without encroaching upon their ties with Tehran.

The issue of the 'Islambouli Street' in Tehran has received the most attention, but is, by far, the least convincing explanation of fissures in Egyptian-Iranian relations. Its symbolic significance has been exaggerated and used by the Egyptian government as an excuse to preserve the status quo. This pretext was actually uncovered when the controversial name was changed in January 2004, but no improvement in bilateral relations ensued. Surprisingly, President Mubarak himself admitted that Egypt's magnification of the impact the name of the street had was just an act of maneuvering. In a closed meeting with a number of journalists, Mubarak was asked about the future prospects of Egypt's relations with Iran. His answer shocked his audience: "We will not resume diplomatic relations with Iran before they change the name of the street. *And if they do, we will search for another excuse*."[2] (Emphasis added)

The power of the theory that maintains that differences between both countries in the nature of their political system and state ideology help to explain their divergence is also limited. Iran has diplomatic relations with numerous secular states in Europe, Asia, Africa and the Arab world. Meanwhile, Egypt has full diplomatic relations with nearly all countries worldwide. Furthermore, the age of passion in Iran has expired and the 'export of revolution' notion has lost ground long ago and was substituted by a new drive towards pragmatism and moderation.

I argue that any attempt to understand the break-up in Egyptian-Iranian relations would fail if the element of 'security' is overlooked. The Islamic Republic is perceived with mistrust and suspicion by Mubarak, who has, on the whole, kept a wary eye on all Islamic movements, inside and outside Egypt, as well as the transnational ties linking these forces. Generally speaking, Islamists - both radicals and moderates - are seen as the most formidable threat to his regime. In fact, many among Cairo's ruling elite believe that Mubarak harbors a deep sense of enmity towards Iran. Enmity or not is hard to prove, but it is clear that the

decision to maintain the status-quo with Iran stemmed from Mubarak himself and that it was essentially triggered by security considerations. An Egyptian scholar of Asian politics seeking an answer to the puzzle of Egyptian-Iranian relations received a uniform answer from Egyptian officials: "whenever I ask about the reason behind the severance of diplomatic relations with Iran, they point out to the picture hung above their desks (i.e. the picture of Mubarak)".[3]

Therefore, the opinion of the diplomatic establishment that recommended attempting at rapprochement with the new generation of Iranian politicians was ignored, while the advice of the security apparatus favoring the perpetuation of the status quo was followed. The latter seem to have well understood Mubarak's psyche and may have even manipulated it. A top diplomat told me that security advisors knew, by long experience, his extreme sensitivity towards the Iranian regime and took advantage of it by overstating the dangers inherent in opening the gates to large numbers of Iranian visitors, a natural consequence to the resumption of diplomatic relations. Security agencies acted, here, on behalf of their own parochial interests.

The second case study dealt with Egypt's relations with both the United States and Israel. Since their inception in the late 1970s, Egyptian-Israeli relations have been firmly tied to Egyptian-American relations. This, in effect, means that Egypt's stature in Washington is dependent on its conduct towards Israel. Though Egyptian politicians were not happy about this awkward way of measuring the quality of their relationship with Washington, they came to terms with it and, at times, manipulated it.

With the exception of the initial honeymoon and a few years during Rabin's premiership, Egyptian-Israeli relations were, for the most part, characterized with friction, ill-feelings and suspicion. Israel's regional policy, particularly on the settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, remained an irritant to policy-makers in Cairo struggling to end their country's loneliness in the Arab world and advance the agenda of peace and co-existence. Other areas of tension included their competition for regional leadership in the post-peace era, Cairo's

concern about Israel's weapons of mass destruction and Israel's complaints about the lack of progress in normalizing ties.

Since Egypt had no substantial leverage on Israeli decision-makers who were generously backed by successive American administrations, the pace of normalization, Egyptian politicians calculated, would have to be controlled in order to encourage them to take painful decisions on the peace process. So as early as 1982, different aspects of normalization were frozen from above whenever dissatisfaction at Israel's policies was to be expressed. Conversely, the ban was lifted when Israel seemed forthcoming and cooperative. This attitude annoyed Washington, but Egypt's services to U.S. interests in the Middle East assuaged its backlash.

If the events of 9/11 changed the international political landscape, then the first, and most profound, manifestations of this transformation came to appear in the Middle East. Influenced by a clique of well-organized, well-connected group of hardliners (neo-cons), the Bush administration wholeheartedly embraced the notions of unilateralism militarism and regime change. All of these antidotes were tried in the Middle East laboratory. In fact, so significant was the change in America's policy in the Middle East that not only did the U.S. target her traditional foes in Iraq, Iran and Syria, but it also extended the battle to her faithful friends and allies, albeit in a different fashion and using a distinct set of jargon. So instead of pretexts such as 'the threat of weapons of mass destruction', the need to get rid of 'rogue states', and the determination to 'root out terrorism" used to the point of exhaustion in the run-up to the war on Iraq, concepts such as "democracy", "civil society" and "reform" were employed with long-time allies such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia. The axiom of "either you are with us, or against us" came to indicate that the age of compromise has passed and that a new era was ushered in, characterized by a hyper-aggressive foreign policy that, out of protecting US national security, expects from its allies nothing short of full compliance.

The American offensive sent shock shivers through the Egyptian establishment. According to a close aide to Mubarak, "the campaign (to promote political reform in the Middle East) was strong. The problem is that it had internal reverberations." A vibrant

opposition movement emerged that adopted various forms of dissent against the regime that, for the first time, seemed to be losing part of its entrenched prerogatives. Arresting critics indiscriminately or savagely treating demonstrators would now trigger wide international condemnation, so the art of self-restraint had to be learnt. On their part, the opposition and societal groups, notably journalists, realized that teeth are falling from the mouth of their antagonist and they took full advantage of it; attacking the President and his entourage turned into a routine, embarrassing the government reached unprecedented levels and demonstrations were organized almost on a daily basis. Concomitantly, Western media reports were replete with titles like 'Egypt's democratic spring' or 'the new Warsaw on the Banks of the Nile' or posed questions like "Is Mubarak Egypt's Gorbachev?" After a few months of American pressure, thus, it felt like the genie in Cairo was out of the bottle and would be hard to convince him to surrender his freedom once again.

Mubarak's counter-strategy included two main pillars. The first entailed introducing cosmetic reforms that would bolster Egypt's image in the U.S. without, in effect, harming its monopoly on the political realm. The measures taken included empowering women, improving the appalling human rights record and espousing a whole set of neo-liberal economic policies.

The second pillar used foreign policy. Knowing well the tripartite nature of Egyptian-American relations, Egypt sought, starting from December 2004, mending fences with Israel. Prisoners were exchanged, the Egyptian ambassador returned to Israel and, most importantly, a significant trade deal was struck. The QIZ - allowing Egyptian exports to the U.S. market exemption from entry tariffs provided that Israeli inputs are used in their manufacturing - represents the most important trade agreement signed in twenty-five years of Egyptian-Israeli relations — a second Camp David, as many analysts portrayed it.

Hence, despite its discernible economic nature, the QIZ agreement was primarily motivated by political considerations, specifically, to alleviate rising U.S. pressure for reform and impede a further corrosion in the regime's capacity to control the course of events at home. The meager contribution of QIZ to the national economy in the years 2005 and 2006

confirmed the arguments skeptics had raised upon the signing of the deal in December 2004. The increase in exports generated by the scheme did not exceed a scanty 5% by August 2005. Moreover, by the end of November 2005, only 30 companies out of 397 registered with the QIZ program (i.e. only 7.5%) managed to export their production to the United States.[4] By now, the talk of associating the bliss of QIZ with generating thousands of job opportunities and attracting foreign investment in billions is, to all observers, gone with the wind.

The Egyptian plan was a success. Tensions with the U.S. government have actually eased after these measures were taken, so that when the old Egyptian way of doing business resurfaced during the presidential and parliamentary elections held in 2005, the old American way of turning a blind eye to the ugly perpetrations of its authoritarian friends re-emerged. Corruption, once again, was tolerated in return for Egypt's services to U.S. interests in various hot spots of the Middle East, such as Israel, Iraq and Iran.

The analysis of the two case studies verifies the study's initial hypotheses. First, security is the key word to understanding the bizarre Egyptian behavior. Not willing to resume diplomatic relations with Iran in spite of the political and economic gains promised by such a step and changing course towards a not-very-friendly neighbor by taking measures that do not necessarily serve Egyptian interests can be only explained in light of the security lens. Feelings of insecurity, moreover, are not triggered only by power calculations, but by threat, whether real or imagined. As such, powerful and hegemonic Israel is far less threatening than Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood or, at the regional level, forces like Hamas, Hizbullah or Iran.

Second, the interest of the state in both cases was forsaken to serve the interests of the regime. Under pressure, leaders in the Third World would protect themselves at the expense of their state. The concepts of 'state' and 'regime' are hardly distinguishable by ruling elites and, as such, contravening one for the sake of the other does not necessarily look awkward. This is most evident when survival is at stake.

In both cases, the core values of the national interest were breached, whereas the specific interests of the ruling regime and its allies (the security apparatus and business groups) were served.

Third, even when external threats to a state's territorial integrity are absent, the coordination between external parties and domestic political forces are perceived with deep suspicion and seen as a threat. Accordingly, scenarios in which Iran collaborates with radical Egyptian Islamic groups to undermine Mubarak's rule or America encourages general liberties to an extent that threatens his authority would have to be avoided at any cost, even if the bearer of that cost is Egypt's national interests.

In fact, the relationship between the inside and the outside has never been blurred as it is in the twenty-first century. The proliferation of new sources of information that are beyond the control of governments like satellite technology and the Internet exposed people to news, ideas and values previously blocked, partially or wholly. This development pleased the masses, as much as it worried ruling elites who realized that their political authority is in danger, since control of information on political issues is no longer possible. The substantive role played by Al-Jazeera channel in the Arab world is a good example of the revolution introduced by technological advances. The hostile actions taken by many Arab governments against the channel and its personnel reveal the magnitude of the harm the channel had inflicted on these governments' legitimacy.

Fourth, the level of threat, calculated using Walt's four factors: aggregate power, geographical proximity, offensive power and aggressive intentions dictate the threatened state's response; high-level threats are appeased and low-level threats are balanced. The fact that Egypt appeased the Americans and balanced the Iranians proves this point (see table 1).

Table 1: The Level of Threat (Iran and the United States):

	Iran	The United States
Aggressive Intentions	Yes	Yes
Geographical Proximity	Yes	Yes
Aggregate Power	Medium	High
Offensive Power	Medium	High

The fact that the help of a number of regional and international allies could be used to stand up to Iran, and that no allies could be relied upon to face the US (the world's sole superpower), consolidated the choice of balancing the Iranians and bandwagoning with the Americans.

Fifth, the importance of the different levels of the operational environment notwithstanding, studying the leader is paramount to understanding the foreign policy of Third World states. In societies were power is highly centralized, political and social groups are weak and fragmented, and domestic constraints on leaders are ineffectual or absent, the idiosyncratic factor tends to make a big difference. Grasping the contrast between Iraq's Saddam Hussein and Syria's Hafez Asad illustrates the point:

"Asad turned Syria from a victim of stronger neighbors into a formidable player that was generally thought to punch above its weight in foreign affairs. Iraq, on the other hand, enjoyed the most balanced combination of power resources in the Arab world, but Saddam Hussein, in the course of two devastating wars, dissipated these resources and turned Iraq into a victimised pariah state."[5]

The role of Mubarak in Egypt's foreign policy is no less profound. As explained in chapter three, his cautiousness and overstated attention to security matters significantly influenced his domestic and foreign policies. Though both Nasser and Sadat were highly attentive to the security of their regime too, their bold and dynamic personalities mitigated that concern. In other words, if leaders of authoritarian Third World countries were concerned about the stability and security of their regimes, the degree of that concern and its real effect on their policies would vary depending on the attitude of the leader, or ruling elite.

In a nutshell, I showed that security calculations and considerations of political survival weigh heavily in the foreign policy decisions of Third World states. They play even a greater role when the leadership - the principal foreign-policy maker - is obsessed with its regime's endurance and its own safety. This is not to argue that the national interest and the interest of the regime are destined to clash. In fact, they are often consistent with each other.

I also do not discount the relevance and importance of other policy inputs. A country's geographic location, internal homogeneity, economic conditions, and international alliances do certainly influence foreign policy outcomes. Yet, I tried to signal out the importance of regime security for it has not attracted, generally speaking, sufficient scholarly interest. In the case of Egypt's foreign policy, moreover, it has never been studied.

I also demonstrated that in the Third World, where institutionalization is low and leaders are not held accountable by the public, the objective of regime security does represent under some circumstances (e.g. acute internal threats and a cautious leadership that is too much obsessed with stability) the most crucial factor influencing a decision.

Furthermore, I do not argue that foreign policy is the only instrument used by leaders to ensure their survival. A whole set of domestic policies - political and economic - are harnessed for the same objective. In the words of Daniel Brumberg:

"How could Arab leaders shape political openings that responded in a minimal way to the growing demands for political reform without unleashing forces that might bring the former crashing down? How could rulers play the transition game while minimizing or even precluding the possibility of losing? The answer lies in a combination of political and economic survival strategies"[6].

Additionally, foreign policy decisions are invited when the need arises.

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[1]Nevine Mossaad, interview by author, 18 May 2006, Cairo, tape recording, Institute of Arab Research and Studies, Cairo.

[2]Mohamed Al-Sayed Selim, interview by author, 15 August 2005, Cairo, tape recording, Center of Asian Studies, Cairo University, Cairo.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Magda Khidr, "A Year of QIZ: Limited Exports to the US Market," *Al-Araby*, 13 November 2005.

[5]Raymond Hinnebusch, *The International Politics of the Middle East* (Manchester & New York: Manchester University Press, 2003), 119.

[6]Daniel Brumberg, "Authoritarian Legacies and Reform Strategies in the Arab World," in *Political Liberalization and Democratization in the Arab World, Volume 1: Theoretical Perspectives*, ed Rex Brynen, Paul Noble and bahgat Korany (Boulder & London: Lynne Rienner, 1993), 235.

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